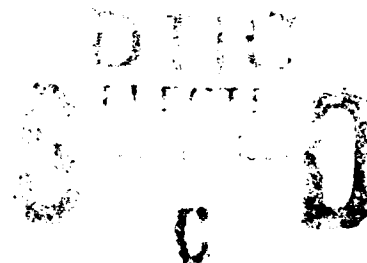




# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

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# THESIS

INDIAN NAVAL DEVELOPMENT:  
POWER PROJECTION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN?

by

Annette M. Haynes

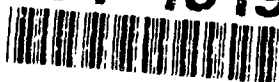
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INDIAN NAVAL DEVELOPMENT:  
POWER PROJECTION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

by

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Lieutenant, United States Navy  
B.A. University of Wisconsin-Platteville 1982

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Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

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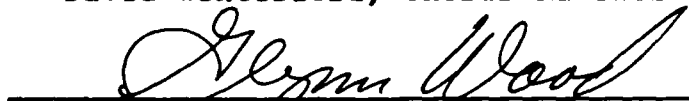
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# ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the U.S.-India relationship in the context of a world power interacting with the predominant regional power. The growing Indian military's power projection and nuclear weapons capability make the Indian Ocean region a critical area for American foreign policy during the next decade. New Delhi's desire to be a hegemonic power in the region combined with the U.S. military drawdown in reaction to the changing strategic environment could threaten long-term U.S. interests. The United States can no long afford to remain relatively disinterested in the region and must develop a comprehensive policy to promote regional security and stability.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet Union has embarked on a new approach to foreign policy, the results of which were exemplified by the image shattering events of 1989 and the recent reunification of Germany. As a result of the new emerging world order, the United States must reevaluate its global relations and commitments. The United States will probably allocate fewer resources to Europe as the threat of war in the European theater decreases. Indeed, U.S. interests in Europe are changing, perhaps relatively declining as other regions gain in importance. As part of the reevaluation of American relations and commitments, it is critical for Washington to examine U.S. policies toward India and the Indian Ocean region. The United States may well have underestimated India in the past. Recent events in the Indian Ocean region indicate the United States should not ignore this emerging regional power.

Taking into account the implications of the shifting global strategic environment, the primary objective of this thesis is to assess Indian security interests, military capabilities, the regional threat environment and India's changing power projection ability. This analysis will provide the basis for briefly indicating and assessing potential U.S. security and strategic policy options for the region.



Throughout the thesis, two tracks will be considered: India's apparent intention and growing capability to be the hegemonic power in South Asia; and regional reaction to that intention and capability, especially regional concern with India as a perceived threat.

The second chapter will provide a concise assessment of the U.S.-India relationship, a relationship evolving largely as a result of changing U.S. interests in the Indian Ocean region. This chapter will provide the framework for determining the significance of India as a major U.S. interest. Chapter II will also assess India's security dilemmas and concerns, to ascertain whether India represents a threat to the region's stability, as well as to indicate India's perceived threats. The chapter will look at New Delhi's domestic and regional rationale for expanding the Indian military and the impact the Indian military buildup has on Indian power projection capability. The assessment in this chapter is critical to understanding India's perceptions of its military requirements, Indian policy initiatives in the region, and the potential for continuing and heightened regional instability.

Since 1971, the Indian government has enjoyed a "special relationship" with the Soviet government. Among other things, the Soviet Union provides military equipment in exchange for Indian consumer goods. India's relationship with the Soviet Union currently constitutes New Delhi's most critical

bilateral relationship. Chapter III will thus examine India's "alliance" with the Soviets. One of the vital issues analyzed in this chapter is India's assessment of Mikhail Gorbachev and New Delhi's evaluation of anticipated Soviet support to India during the 1990s. Changing Soviet relations with Pakistan and China may well alter Soviet-Indian relations. Of equal importance is a recalculation by New Delhi and Moscow of the merits of their "special relationship" in light of dynamic internal economic and international military shifts.

One major foreign policy tool for India is its military capability. Chapter IV will assess India's growing defense establishment, examining the changing roles of the military, India's nuclear capability, and the economy's capacity to support the continuing defense buildup. Defense planning and subsequent spending must be evaluated to determine the circumstances under which India could deploy its military and further develop its nuclear weapons capability.

The final chapter will briefly examine the implications of Indian military development and power projection in the region for U.S. regional interests. This chapter will also attempt to indicate if India's role as the emerging regional hegemonic power of South Asia is in the American interest. Finally, this chapter will indicate options and propose recommendations for U.S. policy toward India.

## II. INDIA-UNITED STATES RELATIONSHIP: IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES?

Disharmony has dominated relations between the United States and India since World War II. Areas of mutual interest, such as a shared belief in the principles of democracy and the desirability of economic development, have been unable to provide the foundation for a sustained, cooperative relationship between the two nations.

Since the end of World War II, U.S. policy in South Asia has been characterized by varying degrees of interest and involvement. Critical events in the region, usually centered on the use of, or threat to use, military force have been instrumental in shifting the focus of U.S. interests. However, the emerging new world order includes not only warming relations between adversaries and renewed competition between friends, but possibly, and more importantly, a more fundamental shift in U.S. global interests and priorities. Today, the ice of the Cold War has been chipped away by glasnost and perestroika, casting a new light, not only on U.S.-Soviet relations, but also on bilateral relations between the United States and other national actors, such as India.

At the same time, the dynamic international situation has forced India to reevaluate its relationships with the world's

major powers. India is attempting to maintain its present security, political, and economic relationship with the USSR, while simultaneously seeking to improve relations with the United States.

This chapter will provide a concise overview of the friction-filled U.S.-India relationship since India's independence in 1947. Long term objectives and interests in the region are critical in determining possible U.S. policy options regarding India during the next decade.

#### **A. U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN SOUTH ASIA**

American interests on the subcontinent have varied since India's independence, but U.S. policy towards India has not significantly changed. In general, U.S. policymakers have viewed South Asia in the context of the Cold War and the containment of communism. American foreign policy interests in the region are most clearly evident in five areas: the People's Republic of China (PRC); Pakistan; Soviet-Indian relations; neutralization of the Indian Ocean; and Indian nuclear capability.

##### **1. People's Republic of China in U.S.-India Relations**

During the 1950s, Sino-Indian relations were troubled, but not in serious disharmony. Although Tibet was an issue between Beijing and New Delhi, India's elites saw no threat from the North/Northeast. In any event, for Nehru, establishing rapport with Beijing was not a top priority. For

the Indian government, the only perceived threat to India was Pakistan, and consequently, New Delhi positioned the majority of its army to combat Pakistani, not Chinese troops. Prime Minister Nehru was less concerned with regional power politics.<sup>1</sup>

With relatively few military assets available, Indian officials concentrated the majority of available forces to the west, against Pakistan, leaving relatively few troops to defend the North/Northeast frontier from the People's Republic of China (PRC). To general surprise, on 20 October 1962, Chinese military forces invaded India, sweeping through the Himalayan passes and crushing a totally unprepared Indian Army. Four days later, the PRC issued a statement on the border question and proposed a ceasefire and withdrawal of the forces of both sides a distance of twelve miles. India rejected China's interpretation of the boundary between India and China. Beijing's position was clear:

There is a traditional customary boundary between the two countries, but the boundary between the two countries has never been formally delimited. The so-called McMahon Line in the eastern sector is a line which the British imperialists attempted to force upon China by taking

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<sup>1</sup> Ashok Kapur, "The Indian Subcontinent: The Contemporary Structure of Power and the Development of Power Relations," *Asian Survey*, July 1988, pp. 694-695, 703-704. In his "globalism" foreign policy, Nehru felt that the best way to stay out of a war was to have no military other than one for limited defense.

advantage of the powerlessness of the Chinese and the Indian peoples.<sup>2</sup>

In response to China's invasion, on 26 October, Prime Minister Nehru requested unspecified military aid from the U.S., Britain, France and Canada. The war had "swept away Nehru's resistance" to accept military assistance.<sup>3</sup> Three days later, Nehru asked Washington for arms. U.S. Ambassador to India, John Kenneth Galbraith, notified Nehru that the United States "would airlift infantry weapons to India ... heavier weapons would follow if needed."<sup>4</sup> Small arms began arriving on 3 November, continuing until 10 November.

On 31 October, Nehru dismissed the defence minister, V.K. Krishna Menon, and assumed the role as Minister of Defence, again requesting U.S. military assistance in the face of Chinese advances.<sup>5</sup> Nehru requested the transfer of 15 fighter squadrons. On 21 November, the United States

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<sup>2</sup> "Statement of the Government of the People's Republic of China," 24 October 1962, *The Sino-Indian Boundary Question*, 2nd ed. (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1962), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Neville Maxwell, *India's China War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), p. 378.

<sup>4</sup> Congressional Quarterly, Inc., *China: US Policy Since 1945* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1980), p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> Maxwell, *India's China War*, pp. 361-363. See also C. Sadasivan, "The Nehru-Menon Partnership," *The Round Table*, January 1987. The Indian public's perception was that Menon, a personally close associate of Nehru was pro-Chinese. Nehru was not blamed for being unprepared for war. Rather, Menon was dismissed, a "sacrifice necessary for Nehru's survival."

responded by moving one U.S. aircraft carrier toward India, but rejected the remainder of the request.<sup>6</sup> On the same day, the Chinese government issued a statement, calling for a ceasefire along the Indian border.

Beginning from the day following that of the issuance of the present statement, i.e., from 00:00 hours on November 22, 1962, the Chinese frontier guards will cease fire along the entire Sino-Indian border...The Sino-Indian boundary question is an issue between two Asian countries. China and India should settle this issue peacefully; they should not cross swords on account of this issue and even less allow U.S. imperialism to poke in its hand and develop the present unfortunate border conflict into a war in which Asians are made to fight Asians.

With PRC troops unilaterally withdrawing, fighting ended the next day, although Nehru rejected the Chinese offer for negotiations, and no official border was established. The impact of the defeat was such a blow to the Indians that they revised the priority of defense in their national objectives. But, even though China humiliated India, Pakistan remained India's primary adversary.

During the Sino-Indian Border Dispute, India surprised the United States at the United Nations. Although India was attempting to ward off the Chinese in northeastern India, New Delhi was pitted against the United States, arguing that China should be admitted to the UN, "where it would be open to the

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<sup>6</sup> Congressional Quarterly, *China: U.S. Policy Since 1945*, p. 133.

<sup>7</sup> *The Sino-Indian Boundary Question*, pp. 43, 46.

'views and discipline' of the organization."<sup>8</sup> U.S. policy at the time was, of course, against admitting China to the U.N.

By the mid-1960s the Sino-Soviet rift was apparent to the world, drastically changing India's strategic environment. In the context of U.S. containment policy, the 1962 Chinese attack on India raised U.S. concern in checking the PRC. As Washington provided military assistance to New Delhi, Pakistan turned to China, gaining support from Beijing in a 26 December 1962 agreement which recognized Pakistan's control over Kashmir.<sup>9</sup> Although Washington supported arms sales to New Delhi following the 1962 border conflict with China, the military assistance programs in India and Pakistan ended in 1965 in light of renewed fighting.

India continues to have border disputes with China today, although they are not a priority for either country. Another Chinese attack, as in 1962, is not probable, although rivalry persists.

The border conflict does not seem to be the primary cause of continued Sino-Indian tension, however. The threat which China presents appears to be a symptom of larger Indian fears of threats to its national security. For New Delhi, the

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<sup>8</sup> Congressional Quarterly, *China: U.S. Policy Since 1945*, p. 132. On 30 October, the UN voted 56 to 42 (12 abstentions) to reject a Soviet resolution for the PRC's admission to the UN.

<sup>9</sup> The Kashmir was still being disputed between Pakistan and India. See below, pp. 11-17.



Chinese "threat" is not so much as an invader, but rather as first, an instigator of anti-India alliance with others, and second, a rival for regional dominance.

Although Washington and New Delhi disagreed over American policy in Vietnam, U.S. withdrawal from Indochina in the mid-1970s, coincided with increasing Sino-Indian rivalry.<sup>10</sup> Mrs. Gandhi saw an opportunity to advance India's power in Southeast Asia by preventing Chinese expansion into that region. The Indian concern that Vietnam might become part of the Chinese sphere of influence provided New Delhi with another bond to the Soviet Union. India's continuing suspicions of the United States were mirrored in renewed American suspicions of India.<sup>11</sup>

Today, New Delhi is very concerned that Indian interests could be disregarded with Sino-Soviet rapprochement and growing accommodation between the United States and USSR. Nevertheless, in this era of promising relationships, Soviet-Chinese amity also means that the USSR is less likely to

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<sup>10</sup> John W. Garver, "Chinese-Indian Rivalry in Indochina," *Asian Survey*, November 1987, p. 1206.

<sup>11</sup> Garver, "Chinese-Indian Rivalry in Indochina," p. 1217.

thwart attempts by the Indians and Chinese to improve relations.<sup>12</sup>

At the moment China is not competing with India for regional leadership of South Asia, but this could be a potential problem for the Indians as the Chinese attempt to increase their influence throughout South and Southeast Asia. The Chinese still view themselves as the center of the world, and Asia's natural leader. As China attempts to influence other Southeast and South Asian nations, India may perceive it as an encroachment on its territory. As the power projection capability of both nations grows, especially in their naval forces, the two states could clash in the South China Seas or the Straits of Malacca, effectively turning the flank of the traditional continental defense position.<sup>13</sup>

It is critical to acknowledge that the Chinese invasion of India in 1962 was the deciding factor for Nehru to bolster Indian defense capability. An important lesson was

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<sup>12</sup> See Sumit Ganguly, "The Sino-Indian Border Talks, 1981-1989: A View from New Delhi," *Asian Survey*, December 1989, pp. 1123-1135, for a summary of the progress made during the first eight rounds of discussion. Since 1980, eight border discussion groups have convened in an attempt to resolve the border issue between the PRC and India. A ninth conference has been scheduled to continue the dialogue in hopes of an acceptable resolution, yet no agenda has ever been set.

<sup>13</sup> This concern over a potential Sino-Indian rivalry in S.E. Asia may partly explain the current mini-arms buildup with ASEAN.

learned by Nehru that non-alignment alone was not enough to deter aggression.

## **2. Pakistan in U.S.-India Relations**

Mohammed Ali Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League, declared in March 1940 that two separate nations, India and Pakistan, should be formed. The Muslim League, determined to have two nations, continued to strive for the creation of an independent Islamic state.<sup>14</sup>

Attempts to resolve the issue of a united India were spurned, as the Congress Party rejected an interim government. Congress was "unwilling to accord the Muslim league its claim to represent all Muslims and therefore have the right to fill all seats reserved for Muslims in the Cabinet."<sup>15</sup> In turn, Jinnah wanted to show that Hindus and Muslims could not cooperate and to prove that the only solution was the formation of a separate state.<sup>16</sup> Suspicion and fear enveloped the two new countries from the onset of independence: the beginning was stormy.

Migration, financial and boundary disputes were only the beginning of unresolved issues. The problem of the

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<sup>14</sup> Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr., *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1980), p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> Hardgrave, *India: Government and Politics*, p. 40.

<sup>16</sup> The British decided that predominantly Muslim provinces would form a separate state; territories with equal numbers of Hindus and Muslims would be divided.

princely states arose. The British informed the princes that they could either join one of the new nations or attempt to maintain their independence. Kashmir remained unresolved and indirectly contributed to a significant portion of defense spending over the past forty years. It is strategically important to both India and Pakistan, positioned between India, Pakistan, the Chinese provinces of Tibet and Sinkiang, and the Soviet Union. More importantly, it was a symbol that Muslims could be content in a secular state (India) or that they could not (Pakistan).

The long-term problem between the United States and India lies in American foreign policy towards Pakistan. Following the Korean War, U.S. policymakers felt that military considerations were more important than economic development. During a visit to the Middle East and South Asia in May 1953, Secretary of State Dulles determined that "bilateral arrangements with individual states could lead to a more formal regional security system."<sup>17</sup> Dulles found Pakistan receptive but not India.

Pakistan was anxious to acquire U.S. military assistance. Its economy was in trouble and it needed arms. Nehru was concerned over Pakistan's acceptance of U.S. military assistance, stating that a American-Pakistani

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<sup>17</sup> William J. Barnds, *India, Pakistan, and the Great Powers* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), p. 92.

alliance "would bring the cold war to India's borders."<sup>18</sup> However, Washington initially saw India as "at least neutral" if not on the side of the communists in the Cold War. Nevertheless, in a letter to Nehru, President Eisenhower stressed that American military assistance to Pakistan was not directed against India. Nehru reportedly considered Eisenhower's comments to be hollow.<sup>19</sup>

When Pakistan joined the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954, the United States, in effect, provided a military assistance program to India's primary adversary.<sup>20</sup> Pakistan's decision to join SEATO was primarily based on its perception that refraining from membership would possibly reduce American economic and military assistance. In signing the treaty, Pakistan referred to aggression, but not only Communist aggression - clearly Pakistan was concerned over Indian bellicosity.

The U.S. position raised problems. By working to obtain allies in Asia, the United States had been pulled into regional quarrels which were of limited concern to the United States. Additionally, Washington has been generally connected to the "weaker country." Although the United States based its

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<sup>18</sup> Barnds, *India, Pakistan, and the Great Powers*, p. 96.

<sup>19</sup> Barnds, *India, Pakistan, and the Great Powers*, p. 97.

<sup>20</sup> Pakistan was the link to Southeast Asian defense as well as the Middle East security system through CENTO, a link in the containment of Soviet expansion.

commitment to Pakistan on containing communism, Pakistani officials expected the United States to follow an anti-Indian stance, since the United States was not "pro-India."<sup>21</sup> For India's part, it had already hinted that it would pursue ties with the Soviet Union if the United States provided military assistance to Pakistan. Nevertheless, as one of the results of the 1962 Chinese invasion, a joint U.S.-UK-Indian air defense exercise was conducted in 1963 and a long term agreement for U.S. arms transfer to India was agreed to in April 1964.<sup>22</sup> In turn, Pakistan now feared a U.S. policy shift toward India, and attempted to cultivate ties with the PRC.<sup>23</sup>

Meanwhile, tension was building between India and Pakistan with the United States caught in the middle. Indian officials claimed that Pakistan used American arms in border fighting, although India also used American weapons against Pakistan. The United States had naively assured India that Pakistan would not use American weapons against India, yet Washington was unwilling to pressure Islamabad to restrain its actions.

In 1965, the United States reduced its interest in the subcontinent: indeed the 1965 India-Pakistan War, which proved

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<sup>21</sup> Barnds, *India, Pakistan, and the Great Powers*, p. 106.

<sup>22</sup> As indicated earlier, India requested US military assistance during the 1962 border conflict with China. U.S. military aid continued following the ceasefire.

<sup>23</sup> Barnds, *India, Pakistan, and the Great Powers*, p. 187.

to be a political disaster for Washington. The United States had provided arms to both countries with the naive stipulation that they would not be used against each other.

In an attempt to develop a coherent foreign policy with its new role as a superpower, the United States befriended Pakistan. In the context of the Cold War, the decision was appropriate, but insensitive to Indian attitudes. The United States lacked an appreciation for the animosity which India felt towards Pakistan.

The United States did not reassert itself into the region until the 1971 Bangladesh Crisis. This conflict was a major obstacle to improving U.S.-India ties in the early 1970s. Indian troops moved into East Pakistan because New Delhi saw military action as "the most appropriate" option to resolve the refugee crisis on its borders. Indian troops moved into East Pakistan in December 1971 to "liberate" Bangladesh. Quickly overrunning the country, India declared the new state of Bangladesh. Washington responded by sending the *Enterprise* carrier group into the Bay of Bengal, which India considered to be outside interference in a regional dispute.

The United States supported Pakistan in this crisis. Secretary of State Kissinger told Indian officials that if they attacked Pakistan, China would attack India, and the

United States would not assist in India's defense.<sup>24</sup> This policy was presumably prompted by the United States desire to normalize relations with the PRC.<sup>25</sup> Ironically, New Delhi initially was receptive to U.S.-PRC rapprochement which India felt might assist China into being admitted into the United Nations and would work toward peace in Vietnam.<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand, New Delhi was concerned that its interests could be adversely affected by the improved relations. In particular, Indian officials viewed with alarm any potential military alliance among the PRC, Pakistan, and the United States. During the 1971 Bangladesh War, neither the Chinese nor the American military actively joined Pakistan in its struggle against India. Intent on improving U.S.-PRC relations, U.S. support for India was hindered by the possibly negative impact it would have on reestablishing America's relations with China. In effect, the United States chose Beijing over New Delhi.

Although United States officials recognized that due to India's resources, markets, strategic position and sheer size, it deserved greater U.S. interest, relations did not improve. Furthermore, Washington lacked credibility with the

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<sup>24</sup> James A. Nathan and James K. Oliver, *United States Foreign Policy and World Order*, 4th ed. (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1989), p. 325.

<sup>25</sup> Hardgrave, *India: Government and Politics*, p. 251.

<sup>26</sup> Barnds, *India, Pakistan, and the Great Powers*, p. 246.



Indian government.<sup>27</sup> Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh returned from Washington in 1971 with a U.S. imposed "hold" on military shipments to Pakistan. However, a bureaucratic problem resulted in an estimated \$3.8 million worth of small arms being sent to Pakistan between March 25 and September 30, 1971.<sup>28</sup> It appeared to the Indian government that the United States broke its embargo agreement not to ship arms to Pakistan, as arms and parts were delivered during that time period. However, this appears to be an unfair criticism of the United States since the arms shipped were ordered prior to March 25. New licenses for American exports were not issued nor were they renewed, but previously issued licenses were not revoked.<sup>29</sup>

Other U.S. decisions during the 1970s adversely impacted U.S.-India relations. The Symington Amendment of 1979 does not allow the U.S. Congress to approve military aid for states which appear to be developing nuclear weapons.<sup>30</sup> As a result, in 1979, the United States cut off military aid to Pakistan as it made its nuclear aspirations clear.

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<sup>27</sup> Christopher Van Hollen, "The Tilt Policy Revisited: Nixon-Kissinger Geopolitics and South Asia," *Asian Survey*, April 1980, p. 344.

<sup>28</sup> Van Hollen, "The Tilt Policy Revisited," *Asian Survey*, April 1980, p. 344.

<sup>29</sup> Barnds, *India, Pakistan, and the Great Powers*, p. 245.

<sup>30</sup> The Symington Amendment was an amendment to the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act.

However, the decision to suspend arms transfers to Pakistan was overturned as a result of the December 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In May 1981 the United States approved a \$3.2 billion aid deal; half of the package was military aid which included the sale of 40 F-16s and which waived the Symington Amendment. New Delhi rejected Washington's justification for countering Soviet expansion by using U.S. military assistance to Islamabad. As Islamabad aided the Afghans, New Delhi feared that Pakistan might turn the U.S. arms toward Islamabad's traditional adversary, India.

The U.S. decision on military sales to Pakistan was prompted by the Soviet invasion and fears of continued Soviet expansion. With the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 and in the context of the new world order, the United States is now reassessing its arms transfers to Pakistan. Due to "new evidence" of Pakistan's joining the "nuclear club," Washington suspended military aid to Pakistan on October 1990.<sup>31</sup>

### **3. Soviet Union in U.S.-India Relations**

Although one American policy objective in South Asia concerned itself with reducing Soviet influence in the region, paradoxically Soviet interaction, militarily and politically, has been far greater than American influence in India. Waning

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<sup>31</sup> Sheila Tefft, "Stung by Aid Suspension, Pakistan Reviews Uneasy Dependence on U.S.," *Christian Science Monitor*, 30 October 1990.

U.S. interest after 1965 created an opportunity for the Soviet Union, an opportunity eagerly grasped by Moscow.

After the sudden death of India's Prime Minister Shastri in 1966 the Congress Party selected Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister. Mrs. Gandhi continued her nation's policy of nonalignment. However, apparent Soviet evenhandedness toward Pakistan irritated Mrs. Gandhi. Indira's foreign policy perspective was somewhat less globally and more regionally focused than Nehru. Both agreed, however, that the intervention of external powers in regional affairs was unacceptable.

With Soviet encouragement, in July 1966, Mrs. Gandhi called for a cessation of U.S. bombing in North Vietnam. However, India did not go as far in its statement as the Soviets wanted--a condemnation of U.S. activities in Indochina. Nevertheless, during Premier Kosygin's visit to New Delhi in January 1968, the two leaders issued a joint communique, calling for the unconditional cessation of U.S. bombing in North Vietnam.

As the previous section indicated, China became involved on the subcontinent in the 1960s. The PRC began providing Pakistan with military equipment, causing concern in New Delhi. The Pakistani action could have provided India with the motivation to open discussions with Moscow in 1969. The impact of the U.S. decision to use Pakistan to open relations with Beijing certainly forced New Delhi officials to

consider the potential encirclement by hostile neighbors and to search for a superpower which could be brought into the region on India's side. Consequently, by signing a treaty with Moscow in the summer of 1971, Indira considered the U.S. neutralized in the region by the Soviet Union. New Delhi thus considered India now to be the emergin hegemonic power in the regio .

Through the early 1970s the United States was distracted by its withdrawal from Vietnam, the Arab-Israeli War and the resulting oil embargo, and Watergate. All of these issues effectively prevented any new U.S. initiatives toward New Delhi.

The election of President Carter in 1976 ushered in a new era in U.S. foreign policy. The Carter Administration undertook major initiatives to try to improve U.S.-India relations. In July 1977 Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher stated in New Delhi that the United States looked to India to provide the leadership in South Asia.<sup>32</sup> This new approach coincided with the election of the Janata Coalition Government following national elections in India. Morarji Desai, India's new Prime Minister, tried to return to a traditional non-aligned foreign policy. The Carter Administration's pursuit of conventional arms control was well

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<sup>32</sup> Zalmay Khalilzad, Timothy George, Robert Litwak, and Shahram Chubin, *Security in Southern Asia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), p. 161.

received in India.<sup>33</sup> However, the Administration's interest in curtailing the spread nuclear weapons through the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was not well received.<sup>34</sup>

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 not only increased Washington's concern about the region, but severely degraded U.S.-India relations. As the United States began a rapid modernization of the Pakistani military, to meet the Soviet threat, it not only drove a wedge into U.S.-India relations, but pushed India closer to its source of arms, the Soviet Union. Additionally, Mrs. Gandhi returned to power in January 1980. As Soviet-Indian relations became closer and more cordial as India reacted to Pakistan's increased military threat, Washington in turn became increasingly antagonized by New Delhi. Indeed, with respect to U.S.-India relations, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and India's refusal to condemn the action, adversely affected any continuation in improving bilateral relations between the two countries.

Overall, throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s, the Soviets successfully seized opportunities to strengthen ties with the Indians and to spread Soviet influence in the region. In turn, New Delhi saw an opportunity to manipulate the Indo-

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<sup>33</sup> See the following section on "Neutralization of the Indian Ocean," pp. 22-26.

<sup>34</sup> New Delhi saw and continues to see the NPT as a means of denying to those outside "the Club," the power and prestige associated with nuclear weapons. For Indian officials, this suggests that Third World countries would act more irresponsible than those with such weapons.

Soviet relationship to its benefit. On balance, as Chapter III indicates, India's power projection capability has been enhanced through its bilateral relationship with Moscow.

Currently, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, and warming U.S.-Soviet relations in the 1990s, have reduced the salience of "containing" the USSR in the region. Indeed, Soviet influence in the region seems to be receding.

#### **4. Neutralization of the Indian Ocean**

Although supported by New Delhi, the 1971 Indian Ocean Zone of Peace initiative was not presented to the United Nations by India, nor did the Indians co-sponsor the resolution.<sup>35</sup> When introduced to the General Assembly, India had "serious reservations" concerning the interpretation of and changes to the proposal.<sup>36</sup> The proposal pressed:

all states to consider and respect the India Ocean as a zone of peace from which Great Power rivalries and competition, as well as bases conceived in the context of such rivalries and competition, either army, navy or air

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<sup>35</sup> S. Bilveer, "India and the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace: Developing a Paranoid Obsession-Part II," *Asian Defence Journal*, February 1990, p. 36. India was aware thhat the proposal was directed at New Delhi. While it supported the concept, Indian officials attempted to create a zone of peace "which would allow India a dominant role in the region."

<sup>36</sup> K. Subrahmanyam, "Arms Limitation in the Indian Ocean," *Superpower Rivalry in the Indian Ocean: Indian and American Perspectives*, eds. Selig S. Harrison and K. Subrahmanyam (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 223.

force bases, are excluded. The area should also be free of nuclear weapons.<sup>37</sup>

New Delhi considers any external actor to adversely impact India's ability to influence regional events. In 1971, the United States began construction of a communications facility on Diego Garcia. With the continuing development of Diego Garcia, the U.S. military presence on Diego Garcia, strategically positioned in the Indian Ocean, has become a major irritation in U.S.-India relations.

Indian leaders have consistently opposed U.S. expansion of military facilities on Diego Garcia. As early as 1974, Indian Foreign Minister Singh stated that it was "a matter of great concern," and that:

Our view is quite clear. We have told the Americans that the bringing in of naval units, including aircraft carriers, in this region without any ostensible objectives, has caused concern to all littoral countries, including India, and that this type of show of force will never be relished by any country in the region.<sup>38</sup> We have adopted a clear and categorical position.

New Delhi used the international principle of freedom of navigation to explain the Soviet naval presence in the region, since the Soviets have no operational bases in the Indian Ocean. Conversely, India sees Diego Garcia as a potential U.S. nuclear base. Since the Indians aspire to be

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<sup>37</sup> As quoted by Subrahmanyam, "Arms Limitation in the Indian Ocean," p. 225.

<sup>38</sup> "United States Plan to Set Up Island Base is Chilling Relations with India," *New York Times*, February 8, 1974, p. 1.

the dominant regional power and fear U.S. nuclear strength, they actively pursue diplomatic efforts to create an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace.

India recognizes that uninhibited movement through the Sea Lanes of Communications (SLOCs) is necessary for all nations. All nations have legitimate interests in all oceans, whether for oil access or other trade.

The original Zone of Peace resolution, pertaining to the water surface, was acceptable and was viewed by India as a "worthwhile arms control measure."<sup>39</sup> Subsequent crises over oil and oil prices made implementation of the proposal virtually inconceivable. Subrahmanyam cites lack of implementation as causing as "an acute sense of insecurity and security dependence on great powers--especially the United States."<sup>40</sup>

As stated earlier, India initially looked more favorably toward the United States during the Carter Administration. President Carter proposed the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean during a new conference on 9 March 1977, but ten days later modified the statement, calling for "mutual military restraint in the Indian

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<sup>39</sup> Subrahmanyam, "Arms Limitation in the Indian Ocean," p. 230.

<sup>40</sup> Subrahmanyam, "Arms Limitation in the Indian Ocean," p. 230.



Ocean."<sup>41</sup> The Soviets likely favored keeping Soviet vessels in the region, since that would theoretically reduce the U.S. threat from the Indian Ocean. Once again, New Delhi and Moscow shared a mutual interest: if the United States positioned nuclear weapons in the Indian Ocean, then both New Delhi and Moscow saw benefits in having a Soviet presence in the area.

Today, it is most unlikely that New Delhi actually wants to restrict its naval activity in the Indian Ocean.<sup>42</sup> For other regional powers, this could mean that India intends to act as the regional "policeman." However, the smaller nations in the region continue to attempt to draw external actors into regional affairs, suggesting their fear of Indian dominance.

In seeking neutralization of the Indian Ocean, New Delhi's objectives remain: Indian naval military growth and the elimination of foreign military bases and the elimination of external naval forces in the Indian Ocean. India's focus is likely to be to the west without, however, ignoring the military significance of Port Blair in the Andaman Islands in

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<sup>41</sup> Subrahmanyam, "Arms Limitation in the Indian Ocean," p. 231.

<sup>42</sup> Walter K. Anderson, "Emerging Security Issues in the Indian Ocean: An American Perspective," *Superpower Rivalry in the Indian Ocean: Indian and American Perspectives*, eds. Selig S. Harrison and K. Subrahmanyam (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 56.

the eastern reaches of the Indian Ocean. As Chapter IV suggests, India's naval buildup will undoubtedly allow for increased opportunity to strengthen Indian military and political influence throughout the Indian Ocean.

For the United States, freedom of navigation remains a top priority, and to ensure it with the necessity of naval strength. India, too, views naval force as essential for power projection in the Indian Ocean. Convergence of mutual interests between the two nations does exist including freedom of navigation, access to oil in West Asia, and safeguarding the sea lanes of communication. Nevertheless, despite some mutual interests, they are overshadowed by areas of confrontation, particularly concerning the neutralization of the Indian Ocean. With its growing military-industrial complex, India is positioning the Indian Navy to play an increasingly significant regional role. Thus, the prospect of continuing security threats in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea will, in all likelihood, adversely affect the U.S.-India relationship as objectives diverge on the waters of the Indian Ocean.

#### **5. Nuclear Weapons**

Initially the United States and India had been involved in the development of nuclear power for commercial purposes in India since the 1963 Tarapur Atomic Power Station

(TAPS) Agreement.<sup>43</sup> When China joined the "nuclear club" in 1964, Indian interest shifted from commercial to military application of nuclear technology.

In 1972, Indira Gandhi announced that India intended to test a nuclear device for peaceful purposes. The nuclear explosion at Pokharan on 17 May 1974, successfully demonstrated India's ability, bringing it too into the "nuclear club." The United States claimed that India had violated the TAPS agreement by diverting heavy water intended for the power plant to the nuclear weapons program. Washington's unilateral decision to suspend transfer of additional heavy water to India was strongly protested by New Delhi.<sup>44</sup> India quickly turned to the Soviets for the heavy water required to operate the power station. Once again, opportunity surfaced for the USSR. In response, the United States ended its nuclear cooperation agreement with New Delhi.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act in the United States required that if, after 18 months, the recipient of nuclear assistance had not accepted international inspection and 'safeguards' to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons,

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<sup>43</sup> Surjit Mansingh, "The Reluctant Duo: What India Expected of America," *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, Winter 1988-89, p. 210. India joined the International Atomic Energy Agency in 1955. Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace program encouraged additional research.

<sup>44</sup> Vijay Sen Budhraj, "The Politics of Transfer of Nuclear Technology: A Case Study of the Tarapur Agreement," *Australian Outlook*, April 1984, pp. 21-25.

American aid would be stopped.<sup>45</sup> India still views this as an attempt to further interfere with its national security.

Indeed, New Delhi sees that all countries are entitled to arm themselves as they see fit, including nuclear weapons.<sup>46</sup> To date, the issue of nuclear proliferation remains a source of dispute between Washington and New Delhi.<sup>47</sup>

## **B. CONCLUSION**

A threat to the Indian Ocean region by another major power, such as the Soviet Union or China, increased U.S. concern in regional activities, as demonstrated in 1962 when China invaded India and in 1979 when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. When the threat to U.S. interests was minimal or some other region posed a greater impact on the United States, Washington's attention naturally refocused elsewhere. Today, as different centers of power are rising and the Cold War is fading. Thus a change in U.S. interest in the region is once again occurring.

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<sup>45</sup> Hardgrave, *India: Government and Politics*, p. 252. The safeguards were post-hoc U.S. requirements.

<sup>46</sup> Subrahmanyam, "Arms Limitation in the Indian Ocean," p. 228.

<sup>47</sup> Budhraj, "The Politics of Transfer of Nuclear Technology: A Case Study of the Tarapur Agreement," p. 23. Washington has however agreed that France could supply heavy water to India in 1984.

U.S. regional goals, which are influenced by global considerations, impact on South Asia and Indian Ocean policies in several ways. Primary American interests include protecting the sea lanes of communication (SLOCs), enhancing the security of Persian Gulf shipping, maintaining a regional balance of power, denying influence to other major powers, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and regional stability. Secondary political concerns include the perception of India as potentially offering a model for post-colonial political development, along with American humanitarian concerns in the region.

Despite a range of mutual interests in development, business, academic, and cultural realms, and despite shared beliefs in the principles of democracy. The United States has been reluctant to put India at the center of its South Asian policy. Perhaps unrealistically, India expected support from the United States for its domestic and international goals: peace, independence, nonalignment, and international cooperation. At independence the enthusiastic new Indian government saw its special global role: as a peacemaker. Being a former colony, with "similar" experiences to other developing countries who achieved independence following World War II, the Indians presumed U.S. officials would minimally listen to their suggestions and comments.<sup>48</sup> However, New

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<sup>48</sup> Mansingh, "The Reluctant Duo," p. 206.

Delhi was unable to grasp the determined cold war waged between Washington and Moscow. In many ways, New Delhi seriously underestimated American resolve to resist the Soviet Union. Indeed, India did not appreciate that U.S. regional policy is made from the viewpoint of a global actor, consequently it is likely to be frequently at odds with the dominant regional player.

As this review of U.S.-India relations indicates, misperceptions and unfulfilled expectations have resulted in disharmony between the two nations. With the United States' post-World War II foreign policy emerging, regional involvement was based primarily on containment of communism. Conversely, India's ambitions were based first on Nehruistic globalism, later on evolving regional power projection.

This chapter also indicated, continual efforts are required by Washington and New Delhi to develop mutually favorable relations. The key points of contention outlined in this chapter -- relations with Pakistan, China and the Soviet Union, the neutralization of the Indian Ocean, and nuclear proliferation -- will continue to impact U.S.-India relations.

Nevertheless, the changing strategic and political environment may provide a catalyst for improving relations in some of these areas. A definite shift in U.S. relations can be noted in two areas: Pakistan and the Soviet Union. As U.S. policy objectives become similar to New Delhi's interests and expectations, the foundation for an improved relationship may

be found. Of course, China remains a questionable area of contention. It will be important to note how India perceives continuing importance of the political ties between the PRC and the United States. Since the India-PRC rivalry still exists, their relations could become antagonistic. The areas of Indian Ocean neutralization and proliferation of nuclear weapons will continue to be major points of contention. With continuing U.S. interests in the Indian Ocean, especially in light of the current crisis in the Middle East, the United States military is unlikely to withdraw from the region. Additionally, both Washington and New Delhi have made their positions clear regarding nuclear proliferation, with little probability for negotiation in the foreseeable future. A completely harmonious relationship between the United States and India thus should not be expected.

To better facilitate understanding the complexities of the U.S.-India relationship, it is necessary to examine India's most critical bilateral relationship, ties to the Soviet Union. In developing its power base, India turned increasingly to the Soviets for support. However, India's "Soviet option" brought it into increasing conflict with the United States. In effect, India found the United States a stumbling block in attaining New Delhi's policy objectives. Chapter III will thus evaluate the development of the Indo-Soviet relationship and the implications for further growth in the 1990s under Gorbachev's new foreign policy agenda.

### **III. INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS: CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS DEVELOPING A POWER BASE**

New leaders have radically changed approaches to foreign policy between India and the Soviet Union. Josef Stalin's death greatly impacted Indo-Soviet relations which were virtually non-existent prior to 1953. Nikita Khrushchev's new approach to the Third World and foreign policy resulted in opening relations with New Delhi. Today, Mikhail Gorbachev has again taken steps in his new foreign policy strategy.

This chapter seeks first to determine whether the Indo-Soviet relationship is a "limited partnership," essentially a commercial relationship, or a "client association" similar to Cuba or Vietnam; second, to ascertain the Soviet impact on the Indian Naval buildup, including the impact the relationship has on Indian Naval power projection capability; and finally speculate on the extent to which and to what effect the changes within the Soviet Union will have on the Indo-Soviet relationship.

#### **A. EARLY YEARS OF INDO-SOVIET POLITICAL TIES: 1947-64**

On numerous occasions, India provided political support to the Soviets. Their association has not been an overt



alliance, but has given the appearance of growing involvement. As the needs of New Delhi expanded, so did the relationship.

The Indo-Soviet relationship began soon after Stalin's death in March 1953. Prior to Stalin's death, Soviet contact with India was limited. Stalin, suspicious of the British, wanted nothing to do with their "imperialist puppet." New Delhi, on the other hand, did not develop an explicit foreign policy until 1950, preoccupied during the early years after independence with internal issues.

In an effort to reduce political isolation, the Soviets became more receptive to the non-aligned movement in August 1953 as Khrushchev embarked on a new foreign policy approach. Soviet attempts to support a non-aligned country resulted in its first comprehensive trade agreement with India in December. India obtained significant economic concessions which provided for payment in rupees and the use of Indian shipping. The agreement also provided for cultural exchanges between the two countries.<sup>49</sup>

The visits and trade agreement met India's requirements at the time. As a new nation, New Delhi had almost unlimited needs for economic assistance but uncertain political needs. Lacking a complete understanding of its new power, New Delhi saw only a limited basis for relations with the USSR.

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<sup>49</sup> Khalilzad et al., *Security in Southern Asia*, p. 74.

In bilateral relations, India felt it was not treated as seriously as it should be. As the last chapter indicated, U.S. policies toward the region created an opportunity for the Soviets; the United States provided limited economic and political support for the new democracy, slighting India from what New Delhi felt was its appropriate "great" power status.<sup>50</sup> The United States was not seen as sensitive to the political realities of the new nation or to Indian nationalism, whereas the Soviets were viewed more responsive to Indian needs.

Consequently, regional events and attitudes set the stage for expansion of Indo-Soviet relations. The trigger was the 1954 U.S. military assistance program to Pakistan, Washington's action became one more factor in India's decision to move forward with the Soviet trade agreement. Nehru regarded U.S. military aid as an interventionist act in regional affairs and did not accept the assistance in the global sense of containment.<sup>51</sup> For India, Soviet influence balanced the American presence in South Asia. With both superpowers represented in the region, India would be the decisive factor in South Asian affairs. The presence of the

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<sup>50</sup> Mansingh, "The Reluctant Duo," p. 206.

<sup>51</sup> Khalilzad et al., *Security in South Asia*, p. 74.

two superpower rivals in the region presents a danger of confrontation as the powers compete for influence.<sup>52</sup>

New Delhi and Moscow quietly developed a pattern of diplomatically aiding causes to each other's benefit. On 23 June 1955, Nehru and Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin issued a joint communique, pressing for international recognition of the People's Republic of China and reaffirming compliance to the Five Principles of Coexistence.<sup>53</sup> The communique stated a "good-neighbors" policy while denouncing "imperialism." The two nations evidently saw "ample scope for the development of cultural, economic and technical cooperation."<sup>54</sup> When Khrushchev and Bulganin visited New Delhi in late 1955, they expressed complete support of Indian foreign policy, including New Delhi's position regarding Kashmir and Goa and anti-Western sentiments voiced in Indian speeches. The visit concluded with a major agreement for increased trade, a promise of Soviet assisted oil exploration and construction of

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<sup>52</sup> Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr., *India Under Pressure: Prospects for Political Stability* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984), p. 169.

<sup>53</sup> Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Policy Toward India: Ideology and Strategy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 114; William Norman Brown, *The United States and India, Pakistan, Bangladesh* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 376. The five principles include mutual respect, nonaggression, noninterference, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

<sup>54</sup> Donaldson, *Soviet Policy Toward India*, p. 115.

a hydroelectric plant. In addition, the Indians and Soviets had found areas of similar interest: disarmament, Indochina, and China's "right" to a seat at the United Nations.<sup>55</sup>

With Pakistan signing the Baghdad Pact (later CENTO) only five months before the agreement, the impact of global politics on regional actors nudged India closer to the Soviet Union's direction. Thus, as Pakistan found the United States, India found the USSR.

Although Nehru remained committed to nonalignment, Indian foreign policy clearly tilted at times toward the Soviet Union. The Indians and Soviets had found areas of cooperation, not only politically, but economically. Nehru did not criticize the Soviet position in Eastern Europe and was the only member of the non-aligned movement who voted against the U.S.-sponsored UN resolution calling for Soviet withdrawal of troops from Hungary in November 1956.<sup>56</sup> The Congress Party criticized Nehru for his "overcautious, almost apologetic reaction to Soviet imperialism."<sup>57</sup> As a result of domestic political pressure, Nehru's later comments became

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<sup>55</sup> Joint Statement by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR N.A. Bulganin and the Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru as quoted in Donaldson, *Soviet Policy Toward India*, p. 115.

<sup>56</sup> All NAM members, with the exception of India, abstained from the vote.

<sup>57</sup> As quoted in Khalilzad et al., *Security in Southern Asia*, p. 78.

more critical of Soviet action, referring to the Hungarian government as "imposed." India denounced the Soviet activity for violating the Five Principles of Peaceful coexistence.

To minimize the harm to their relations, Moscow extended Rs 600 million credit for industrial equipment and aid for public sector projects. Despite deepening economic ties to the Soviets, Nehru rejected both the communist and capitalist models for Indian economic development, opting for a mixed economy by merging basic concepts of both models.

As Sino-Soviet relations waned in the late 1950s, Nehru's criticism of the Soviets became less evident, with Nehru moderating his remarks as Sino-Indian tension escalated. As Nehru perceived the regional affairs, the Soviets were not only a balance to the United States, but also to China. Consequently, the Soviets could be used, hopefully, to restrain Chinese aggression. However, as Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated, Moscow's position as the sole determinant of the communist bloc's foreign policy was significantly reduced.

India needed a strong Soviet counterbalance to the Chinese, as tensions over border issues continued to intensify. When China invaded India in October 1962, the very foundation of New Delhi's foreign and military policies was brought into question. In an action sobering to India, the Soviet Union reacted to the 1962 Sino-Indian Border Conflict with five days of silence over the incursion. Then on 25

October 1962, a Soviet editorial supported China's offer to resolve the border issue using the "line of actual control." Confronted with a defeated military and limited Soviet support, India was forced to "accept" China's position along the border.

The Indo-Chinese conflict began at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis. During the crisis Khrushchev attempted to ensure at least tacit support from China and the appearance of communist bloc unity as a bargaining tool against the United States. Consequently, it was only after tension over the Cuban Missile Crisis diminished that Moscow returned to its "neutral" position, publicly taking neither side, but continuing to support arms transfers to and heavy industry projects in India.

Military aid from both the East and the West flowed into the area following the Border War with China. As Indo-Soviet relations began to expand, India turned more and more to the Soviets in a variety of areas. By doing so, India obtained several benefits: concessionary terms; technology transfer; and help in building an indigenous production capability. Diversification of aid lent credibility to India's nonalignment posture.

The Sino-Soviet rift played a large role in the Soviet shift from political neutrality during the 1962 conflict. The Soviets were motivated to improve relations with India as Sino-Soviet ties weakened and the West continued its policy of

isolating the USSR. If India, in its strategic position to the south, tilted to the West (the British and Americans were providing significant military assistance to India to counter the Chinese communist threat) the USSR could become encircled by the Western allies. A key Soviet goal was thus to increase India's independence from the West.

Nehru provided close cooperation with Khrushchev. Both leaders continued to look for common interests, reinforcing and expanding ties to strengthen the relationship throughout the early 1960s. Nehru's death in May 1964 marked the end of the formative phase of the Indo-Soviet relationship.<sup>58</sup>

#### **B. INDIRA GANDHI AND THE SOVIET UNION: 1965-84**

During the Nehru years, the Soviets provided tangible international support for New Delhi's foreign policy by backing India's claim on Goa and Kashmir. However, two seemingly unconnected global events in October 1964 impacted the region: Khrushchev was ousted from the Soviet leadership; and, China exploded its first nuclear bomb. India's strategic environment had radically changed, almost overnight. China, already possessing a demonstrated military superiority over India, had now acquired the potential to devastate India. At the same time the Soviet counterweight had to be reconsidered, given the new Brezhnev leadership.

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<sup>58</sup> Khalilzad et al., *Security in Southern Asia*, p. 82.

The Soviets reassured New Delhi that the USSR's policy towards India remained unchanged. The Soviets continued to support New Delhi's foreign policy, as well as expand bilateral economic relations. In 1964-1965, Soviet assistance amounted to \$500 million each year, including a 1.5-2 million ton capacity steel plant promised to India in 1964.<sup>59</sup>

The Soviets remained neutral in the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War over Kashmir. They pushed for a resolution, expressing concern over the proximity to Soviet borders and the potential escalation of the conflict. The USSR, supported by the United States, pressed for a United Nations resolution calling for a ceasefire in September 1965.

Following the 1965 Indo-Pakistan ceasefire, the Soviets mediated a peace agreement between Pakistan and India in the central Asian city of Tashkent. Britain ruled itself out from the peacemaker role;<sup>60</sup> India and Pakistan were angered by the U.S. arms embargo; and China had overtly backed Pakistan. Soviet involvement in the resolution process allowed Moscow to strengthen favorable relations with both countries.

Signs of closer Indo-Soviet ties quickly appeared. In July 1966, during a trip to Moscow, India's new Prime

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<sup>59</sup> Khalilzad, et al., *Security in Southern Asia*, p. 81.

<sup>60</sup> S. Nihal Singh, *The Yogi and the Bear* (Maryland: The Riverdale Company, Inc., 1986), p. 50. British Prime Minister Harold Wilson had originally condemned India's "aggression" to which he later apologized to Indira Gandhi in April 1966.



Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, adjusted her stance on Vietnam and called for an "immediate unconditional halt to American bombing."<sup>61</sup> In the same month, when Pakistan's air chief visited Moscow, he failed to secure an anticipated arms transfer package. Subsequently, a new Indo-Soviet trade agreement was signed in December 1966, with plans to double trade between the two countries by 1971.<sup>62</sup>

Although India disagreed with the "equal distance" Soviet posture toward Pakistan and India during its conflicts with Pakistan, New Delhi maintained favorable relations with Moscow. It was not until April 1968 that Pakistan made its first significant arms deal with the USSR.

Reliance on Soviet economic assistance may have been the reason for India's muted response in August 1968 to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. On the other hand, New Delhi was neither directly affected nor threatened by the invasion. However, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had hoped that the Soviets would withdraw their forces.<sup>63</sup> New Delhi could be seen as acting in its own interest and consequently not jeopardizing its prized relations with Moscow. A dilemma existed, however, for New Delhi. Espousing a leadership role in the Non-aligned Movement, India's response to Soviet action

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<sup>61</sup> Singh, *The Yogi and the Bear*, p. 58.

<sup>62</sup> Singh, *The Yogi and the Bear*, p. 59.

<sup>63</sup> Khalilzad et al., *Security in Southern Asia*, p. 89.

left doubt in the minds of other nations as to New Delhi's non-alignment.

Like her father, Mrs. Gandhi envisioned a high-profile international role for India. Nevertheless, Nehru had maintained distance between himself and the Soviets. Indira, conversely, attempted to involve the Soviets deeply in the region, using Soviet involvement to support her in domestic Indian politics. Of course, this approach posed an additional dilemma for Indira in terms of neutrality in the Indian Ocean and Indian desires to keep the great powers out of the region. Although India thought it could control the Soviet presence, that was not always to be the case.

The early 1970s significantly impacted the regional strategic environment. First, with Sino-American talks in July 1971, India felt increasingly isolated. Henry Kissinger had used India's primary adversary, Pakistan, to facilitate Chinese-American rapprochement.<sup>64</sup> The United States had strongly supported India in 1962, and remained neutral during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir. However, New Delhi could no longer depend on United States support or neutrality in the event of a war with either of its two main adversaries, Pakistan or China. Indian officials began to see a strengthening, triangular relationship among Pakistan, the PRC and the United States. The increased isolation felt by

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<sup>64</sup> Van Hollen, "The Tilt Revisited," p. 343.

India pushed New Delhi to consider closer ties with the Soviet Union.<sup>65</sup>

Secondly, the civil war in East Pakistan generated intense pressure on India. Pakistani refugees created domestic instability in India. The Soviets, providing international support for India, pressed Pakistan to end the "bloodshed and repression," calling for a diplomatic resolution to the situation.<sup>66</sup> India determined that military action would be needed to achieve its goals. Military action in turn, required a continual flow of Soviet arms.

With a tense regional environment as the backdrop, India and the Soviet Union concluded their treaty discussions. On 9 August 1971, the USSR and India signed a twenty-year Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation.<sup>67</sup> The Soviets were able to use the treaty as a step toward an Asian collective security agreement and to justify their security role in the area.<sup>68</sup> However, the treaty did not commit Soviet forces to military action. The treaty also balanced the growing political ties between the United States, Pakistan and China,

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<sup>65</sup> Hardgrave, *India: Government and Politics*, p. 251.

<sup>66</sup> Khalilzad et al., *Security in Southern Asia*, p. 89.

<sup>67</sup> For a copy of the treaty text see Donaldson, *Soviet Policy Toward India*, pp. 267-269.

<sup>68</sup> India did not support the Soviet collective security proposal in 1971. The Indian response to the Soviet concept of Asian-Pacific security has continued to be generally unenthusiastic.

without entirely impeding India's ability for independent action. It is important to emphasize that Indira apparently did not perceive the treaty as a change in New Delhi's nonalignment policy.<sup>69</sup> The political leverage which the treaty provided depended largely on the strategic environment.

With the signing of the treaty, the Soviet's primary gain was the countering of American and Chinese influence in the region and enhanced exchanges and trade with India. Soviet objectives in the Indian Ocean included having a year-round maritime route from European Russia to the Far Eastern portion of the USSR; developing the ability to support "friendly regimes;" neutralizing the American potential to pose a threat to the Soviets; and acquiring a capability for SLOC interdiction.

When Indira visited Moscow in September 1971, the Soviets publicly backed New Delhi's position on East Pakistan and increased arms transfers to India. For India, the Soviet arms transfers provided a reliable source to ensure its military capability. Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Firyubin visited New Delhi, and in November, Moscow acknowledged that the East

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<sup>69</sup> See Article 4 of the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty.

Pakistani refugees were "no longer an internal affair of Pakistan."<sup>70</sup>

After 14 days of fighting, East Pakistan insurgents and the Indian army overpowered Pakistani soldiers, taking 90,000 prisoners.<sup>71</sup> The Soviets vetoed a UN resolution calling for a ceasefire. New Delhi perceived the Soviets as a reliable partner during the hostilities, balancing United States or PRC intervention on behalf of Pakistan. India's victory established the nation's regional predominance and boosted regional perceptions of Indian strength and India as a potential threat. Although the Soviets had supported India, New Delhi reiterated its non-aligned status.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 had little direct impact on Indo-Soviet relations. New Delhi tilted towards Moscow in its comments and avoided public condemnation of Soviet actions. India opted to abstain from the vote on a UN resolution denouncing the Soviet invasion. Since the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries and the Islamic conference condemned the Soviet invasion, New Delhi confronted a new dilemma. Although India sought to continue being recognized

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<sup>70</sup> Khalilzad et al., *Security in Southern Asia*, p. 92; Donaldson, *Soviet Policy Toward India*, p. 230. India felt that the solution to the problem would require the military. Here the Soviets supported India; Soviet action did not denounce military intervention and ensured India would be well-armed.

<sup>71</sup> Brown, *The United States and India, Pakistan, Bangladesh*, p. 220.

as a non-aligned nation, India's action was perceived with suspicion.

The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan surprised New Delhi since Moscow did not officially inform New Delhi of Soviet intentions prior to the invasion. The U.S. response to the Soviet action was the rearming of Pakistan to contain the USSR. The quantity of arms to Pakistan increased along with the modernization of its military equipment. However, the U.S. action raised Indian security concerns. Thus the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was indirectly a cause of India's perception of an increased threat to its security in the 1980s. American rearming of Pakistan, understandable in light of American geostrategic concerns, reduced India's numerical and technical superiority, changing the military and political balance in South Asia.<sup>72</sup>

Indira felt that U.S. assistance to Pakistan was disproportionate to the situation.<sup>73</sup> From New Delhi's perspective the rearming of Pakistan was part of a series of unwanted American actions including the 1970s expansion of Diego Garcia and Sino-American rapprochement. These events meant an escalating U.S. involvement in the region. Thus, with both Soviets and Americans in the Indian Ocean, India was

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<sup>72</sup> See Appendix A for summary of Pakistan and India force strength in 1990.

<sup>73</sup> Khalilzad et al., *Security in Southern Asia*, p. 112.

completely thwarted in its goal of keeping the superpowers out of the region.

On the positive side for New Delhi, the nation's security was enhanced through increased Soviet arms to India. During the 8-11 December 1979 visit to New Delhi, Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev agreed to a military and an economic package with India -- again making the military relationship the glue that cemented their ties.

During the same time period the Soviets offered MiG-25s to India. However, New Delhi demanded top-of-the-line technology from Moscow and received it. The arms package included MiG-29s and MiG-31s in addition to indigenous production of the MiG-29s. This was a dramatic signal of the importance that Moscow placed on the Indian relationship.

Clearly, Afghanistan posed a dilemma for India. India saw Afghanistan, strategically positioned in South Asia, as part of its sphere of influence. The Soviets were thus viewed as an intruder in the region. However, both India and the USSR wanted to minimize outside foreign powers from dominating the Indian Ocean region, thereby sharing a common interest. India's stance on Afghanistan cost New Delhi prestige, compromising its position among non-aligned nations. To its benefit, India was reassured of reliable Soviet military and political support.

The Soviet withdrawal thus improves Indo-Soviet relations and eliminates an embarrassing contradiction for New Delhi in

the Non-Aligned Movement. In fact, Soviet actions in both withdrawing from Afghanistan and improving relations with China dramatically increased India's foreign policy options: New Delhi was now unfettered to try to improve its relations with Beijing.

### **C. INDO-SOVIET MILITARY RELATIONSHIP**

The previous sections reviewed the political-economic association which resulted from Indo-Soviet military ties. This section will examine, more specifically, the military relationship between New Delhi and Moscow. As will be indicated in Chapter IV, India has developed a military force with both Western and Soviet equipment.

#### **1. Evolving Military Ties: 1960-79**

In 1960, India made its first major military purchase of Soviet equipment which included 16 AN-12 air freighters, 26 Mi-4 helicopters and 24 Il-14 transports.<sup>74</sup> The military relationship, which dominates the Indo-Soviet relationship, began to expand between 1962 and 1964. A drift toward the Soviets can be especially noted following the 1962 border conflict with China. A sale of MiG-21s followed in August 1962 and an aircraft construction plant for indigenous

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<sup>74</sup> Nikita Khrushchev made his second visit to India in February 1960, on the 10th anniversary of the Chinese-Soviet Friendship Alliance. The equipment sale was followed by delivery during 1961-1962.



production was contracted with the Soviets.<sup>75</sup> "India is the only country in the Third World to have been given the right to produce Soviet state-of-the-art weapons under license."<sup>76</sup> In a largely Western military (British training, organization and equipment), the Indian Army did not fully support its government's purchase of Soviet military equipment. The diversification of arms suppliers, however, resulted not only in favorable terms with the Soviets and the development of indigenous production of military equipment, but politically agreed with India's policy of non-alignment.

In December 1964, the Indian Defense Minister requested the loan of three Daring Class destroyers. The British offered New Delhi the older Weapon Class ship and World War II submarines. India also requested F-104 Starfighters and C-130 transport aircraft from the United States. The United States refused India's request. India accepted the Soviet proposal for Petya Class frigates. The following year, India agreed to the delivery of four Soviet

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<sup>75</sup> The USSR sold only MiG-19s to the PRC and had not offered the sale of MiG-21s prior to the proposal to India. The MiG-21s, however, did not arrive in India before the Chinese invasion of India in 1962. India was also the first foreign government to receive Soviet MiG-29s and the Charlie SSGN in the 1980s.

<sup>76</sup> Brzoska and Ohlson, *Arms Transfer to the Third World, 1971-1985* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, for SIPRI, 1971), p. 34. See also Ramesh Thakur, "India as a Regional Seapower," *Asian Defence Journal*, May 1990, pp. 4-17.

submarines by 1970. New Delhi continued to expand its Soviet weaponry inventory.

At the outbreak of Indo-Pakistani hostilities in 1965, the West placed an arms embargo on both countries. By contrast, the USSR proved to be a reliable supplier, sensitive, responsive and eager to meet Indian needs.

## **2. Indian Military Modernization and Expansion**

When the Janata coalition took power in New Delhi in 1977, the government embarked on diversification of military equipment. When Indira Gandhi returned to the Prime Ministership in 1980, she continued the diversification trend with purchases of Sea Harrier aircraft, Sea King helicopters and Sea Eagle missiles from the UK; Mirage 2000 fighters from France; and SSK-1500 submarines from West Germany. From the Soviets in June 1980, India agreed to a \$1.6 billion deal for ships and missiles with repayment over 17 years at a concessionary 2.5% interest rate. Clearly, Soviet weaponry and financing had not lost its attractiveness. A 1982 arms transfer deal totalled \$3 billion.<sup>77</sup> In May 1986, India purchased twenty-six Dornier 228 aircraft from West Germany. The sale included three directly purchased aircraft with twenty-three under license for manufacture by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) at Kanpur.

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<sup>77</sup> Thakur, "India as a Regional Seapower," p. 14.

India acquired direct benefits through its arms diversification, such as more advanced technology and negotiated favorable terms, but indirect benefits appear to be just as significant. Supply diversification could pressure the Soviets to improve their terms. Increasing competition in a buyer's market has resulted in concessionary counter-offers for more sophisticated military equipment. License for Indian production of Soviet equipment would also allow for installation of non-Soviet weapons systems. A continual attraction of Soviet arms is that India can upgrade its facilities vice build a completely new factory to produce new systems. Once again, purchasing Soviet equipment would result in a lower unit cost with a production license than if Western equipment was bought off the shelf.

Several events in 1986 occurring cumulatively pushed India ever closer to the Soviets. First, during 25-28 November 1986, U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger flew to India and Pakistan. While in New Delhi, Weinberger expressed sympathy for Indian concerns regarding the rearming of Pakistan, but at his next stop in Islamabad, he extended a deal to Pakistan for AWACS aircraft, M1 Abrams tanks, F-16 fighters, and upgraded avionics for Chinese produced aircraft in the Pakistani inventory. "New Delhi's long-standing

paranoia of a U.S.-Pakistani-Chinese axis bearing down on its security interest was activated."<sup>78</sup>

Second, during his 1986 visit, Mikhail Gorbachev offered Kilo and Tango submarines, and TU-142 Bear maritime reconnaissance aircraft to India. Indian Defense Minister K.C. Pant visited the Soviet Union in February 1988, securing a prized offer for Soviet designs of an Indian indigenously built aircraft carrier. In September 1988, Soviet Defense Minister Dimitri Yazov referred to the recent arms transfer agreements as a "quantum leap" in the Indo-Soviet military relationship, demonstrating the Soviets' positive attitude and emphasis toward India's self-reliance and indigenous production policies.<sup>79</sup> (See Table 3.1 for Soviet origin equipment for the Indian military.) Minimally, Indian purchases of Soviet equipment have provided New Delhi with flexibility in technological development and indigenous construction. In reality, Soviet military assistance to India has provided the critical basis for India's regional power projection capability.

From New Delhi's viewpoint, the Indo-Soviet military relationship is based on four major factors: areas of common

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<sup>78</sup> Jyotinmoy Banerji, "Moscow's Indian Alliance," *Problems of Communism*, January-February 1987, p. 1.

<sup>79</sup> *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 October 1988, p. 35. Indigenous refers to 80% of a product being domestically produced.

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**TABLE 3.1**  
**PRINCIPAL INDIAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT**  
**(SOVIET ORIGIN)**

**ARMY**

- \* 3150 Main Battle Tanks
  - T-72 (1500)
  - T-55 (700)
  - T-80 (unknown number delivered)
- \* Various Surface-to-Air Missiles
  - SA-6; SA-7; SA-8A/B; SA-9

**AIR FORCE**

- \* 28 attack squadrons with MiG-21s, MiG-23s, and MiG-27s
- \* 22 fighter squadrons with MiG-21s, MiG-23s, and MiG-29s
- \* 12 Mi-25 Helicopters
- \* 6 MiG-25R and 2 MiG-25U aircraft
- \* Various transport aircraft
  - Mi-24 Hind
  - Mi-26 Halo
- \* Various AAM; ASM; and SAM

**NAVY**

- \* 1 SSGN; 14 SS Submarines
- \* 5 Kashin DDG
- \* 8 Petya
- \* 8 Corvettes
- \* 9 Amphibious Ships

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Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Military Balance: 1989-1990* (Brassey's 1989), pp. 159-160.

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interest with the USSR; defense technology transfer; favorable credit terms; and good prices. The thrust to India's foreign policy in the region is its opposition to U.S.-USSR rivalry in the Indian Ocean and its drive to establish Indian naval control. A dilemma for New Delhi remains. Although diversification is politically acceptable, in reality, suppliers are limited. The Indians are developing an

indigenous capability, but are presently limited in production and technology, requiring continued purchases from another nation, the USSR.

For the Soviets, political objectives rather than military ones are the major factor in the relationship. Unlike its bilateral relationships with other Third World countries, in which the Soviets have provided arms in exchange for overflight and landing rights, port access, bases, and equipment prepositioning, India has not approved such access for the Soviets. However, the Soviets have been successful in a political-military sense through a substantial weakening of American presence and influence in New Delhi.

#### **D. PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE**

Since 1971, the Indian government has enjoyed a "special relationship" with the Soviet government which provides military equipment in exchange for Indian consumer goods. India's relations with the Soviet Union currently constitute New Delhi's most critical bilateral relationship and must therefore be considered by U.S. policymakers. This chapter has examined India's "alliance" with the Soviets, and has argued that the core of the relationship is essentially military, although it also includes important political and economic support for New Delhi in its struggle as an emerging power.

In view of this "special relationship" in the context of the dynamic international situation, India must reevaluate its relationships with all of the world's major powers: China has an aging leadership, a struggling economy, and unsettled political conditions; Pakistan lost some U.S. support as the Soviet threat dropped; and the Soviet Union confronts its economic problems and changes in military force structure but will it continue to be a reliable partner in arms equipment?

India's assessment of Mikhail Gorbachev is a vital issue. Fears existed that Gorbachev would "sell out the Third World (and India) in his desperation to propitiate the West....(and) equally jittery about the impact of the Soviet new thinking on Indo-Soviet relations and India's standing in the world. "<sup>80</sup> New Delhi's concern initially centered on Sino-Soviet rapprochement and a resulting possible negative impact on Indo-Soviet relations. Improving Sino-Indian relations, however, helped to diminish fears. Nevertheless, changing Soviet relations with Pakistan and Sino-Soviet rapprochement may well alter Soviet-Indian relations. A shift in Soviet focus toward China could place Indian interests in a secondary position.

Of equal importance is a recalculation by New Delhi and Moscow of the merits of their "special relationship" in light

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<sup>80</sup> C. Raja Mohan, "Analyst Reviews Progress of Indo-Soviet Relations," *The Hindu*, 8 August 1990, p. 8.

of dynamic internal economic and military shifts. Two concerns are uppermost in the minds of Indian officials: as U.S.-USSR relations continue to improve, Moscow relegates its security, economic and political relations with India; secondly, the decreased Soviet threat to the West "means the loss of countervailing power for India in its dealings with the West."<sup>81</sup>

Changes in the political environment apparently have not damaged ties as the Indians may have feared. Indian Prime Minister Singh's visit to Moscow in July 1990 was described as "highly satisfactory," quelling doubts on issues affecting New Delhi.<sup>82</sup>

Overall, a significant shift in Indo-Soviet ties can be expected under the following conditions: the Soviets attempt to increase their presence in the region; Soviet-Chinese leaders greatly improve relations; the Soviet economy drastically deteriorates; or the American presence declines. It is conceivable that the Sino-Soviet ties will continue to improve. As the Soviets attempt to move towards a market economy, it is also conceivable that the economy will deteriorate as it adjusts to the system.

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<sup>81</sup> Mohan, "Analyst Reviews Progress of Indo-Soviet Relations," p. 8.

<sup>82</sup> K.K. Katyal, "Moscow Visit Ends an Uncertain Phase," *The Hindu*, 26 July 1990, p. 1.



On the other hand, the remaining conditions are less likely. Soviet military presence in the region has declined, while American military posturing in the Indian Ocean area has actually increased due to the current Middle East crisis.

Given the present realities India will probably continue its amicable relationship with the Soviets as long as New Delhi is unrestrained in its predominant regional role.<sup>83</sup> As the political environment changes, new opportunities for Indo-Soviet relations occur. The possibility exists for Soviet-Indian military exercises and contacts. Corresponding opportunities also exist for U.S.-India military exercises and port visits.

#### **E. CONCLUSION**

India should not be seen as Moscow's agent, client or surrogate in South Asia. New Delhi and Moscow continue to enjoy a "special relationship" despite changes in the top leadership of both nations. However, this does not preclude future shifts in the relationship. Gorbachev has modified the Soviet approach to foreign policy as well as stimulated political and economic reform in his own country. If the Soviet economy becomes increasingly more "westernized," the

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<sup>83</sup> Periodic strains have included post-Tashkent fallout; Soviet pressure for India to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty; Moscow publishing maps "conforming to the Chinese version" of the Sino-Indian border; Indian rejection of the Asian Collective Security concept; and difficulties with public sector projects in India.

Indian government may see less in the way of the economic benefits in its essentially military relationship with the Soviets. India used the Indo-Soviet relationship to develop its regional power base, especially militarily, as an instrument of foreign policy. At this point the relationship is still useful. Moscow has gained not only economic benefits, but perhaps more significantly, political prestige and the denial of American influence. Although India has benefited from a valuable military relationship, a dilemma remains for New Delhi. As the Soviets reduce their presence, the relative U.S. military strength increases in the Indian Ocean region. The current strategic environment adversely impacts New Delhi's goal of eliminating external actors from regional events. Chapter IV will discuss India's military buildup and options available for India's success as a regional power.

#### **IV. INDIA'S GROWING DEFENSE CAPABILITIES: THREAT OR SAVIOR?**

Changes in India's internal security and external strategic environment have led not only to a shift in India's foreign policy but also in its national and regional defense requirements. The changing regional strategic environment and India's own aspirations as a nation are reflected in India's military buildup and foreign policy.

The chapter begins by providing a very brief background on India's industrial base. Section A will review selected aspects of the economy's industrial development as it impacts on India's military and India's rise to regional dominance. This assessment seeks to determine whether India can continue its military buildup--and at what cost. Section B will examine the Indian military strength and the impact of its buildup. Although the emphasis of this chapter is naval development, background information on the army and the air force is necessary to compare with the naval buildup, as well as a concise assessment of defense expenditures. Finally, as India drives to provide leadership in South Asia, the chapter will look at whether India feels it has a reserved right to intervene in neighboring countries. This final section will explore issues which may impact on India's ability to be the decisive leader of the region.

## A. BACKGROUND

India is the predominant regional power in South Asia. India occupies the geostrategic position in the Indian Ocean region; acting as the fulcrum of the subcontinent land mass.

India's agricultural output exceeds internal consumption requirements, and India exports its grain surplus while maintaining a healthy reserve to support the population during famines. The country is able to produce ninety percent of its coal and sixty percent of its petroleum requirements and almost 100% of the iron ore bauxite, manganese and uranium requirements.<sup>84</sup> As a growing industrial power, India has been able to sustain a six percent annual rate of economic growth between 1976-86.<sup>85</sup> Growth over 1988-89 has dropped slightly to just over five percent. To support the growing industrial base and economy, India maintains the world's third largest pool of scientists and engineers, and the fourth largest standing army. India's nuclear and satellite launching capability give it an expanding power projection potential.

In its quest for national security and regional predominance, India blazed the trail in the nonaligned movement (NAM), maintaining its NAM leadership position even

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<sup>84</sup> Surjit Mansingh, *India's Search for Power* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1984), p. 271.

<sup>85</sup> Raju Thomas, *Indian Security Policy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986).

after tilting toward the Soviet Union. Although the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Peace meant troubled relations for India with the United States, Pakistan and China, for India, the treaty meant security. The treaty with the Soviets was the basis for the military growth of the 1970s and critical to the more rapid buildup of the 1980s.

#### **B. MILITARY BUILDUP**

Although the bulk of this chapter deals with India's naval development, a general assessment of military force is required in order to understand India's perceptions of its strategic environment and regional perceptions of India. Several motives might explain India's military buildup: first, a fear of Pakistan; second, the changing strategic environment; and third, India's own aspirations as a nation.

Despite past problems in India's economic development, India's mixed economy has resulted in significant achievements since independence. Exceptional success has been accomplished in agricultural production, which in turn has allowed the growing economy to support technological research and development (R&D). Progress in armaments in turn has been strengthened by an earlier emphasis on industrial development, development now being used to support military growth and production. Thus, India's relative prosperity and purpose have supported movement toward the national objective of self-reliance.

India's emerging economic power is reflected in the current strengthening of its military. The British legacy still greatly influences the Indian Army and that tradition had immensely affected civilian elite decisionmaking during the early post-independence period. British officials stressed "separate spheres" of influence between the civil service and Indian military officers with the civilians dominating the decisionmaking process and limiting the military involvement in decisionmaking.<sup>86</sup> The military was divided into three branches under the Defence Minister in 1947. It was not until 1962 that Prime Minister Nehru strengthened the military position. As discussed in Chapter II, Nehru shifted priorities to modernize India's defense capability.<sup>87</sup>

As the British maintained "separate spheres" of military and civilian influence, today's Indian military remains relatively uninvolved in civilian politics. Nevertheless, a political understanding is essential at the higher command positions.

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<sup>86</sup> Stephen P. Cohen, *The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 29.

<sup>87</sup> This strengthening resulted from the Chinese invasion of India in 1962.

## **1. Indian Army and Air Force**

Army composition and structure have changed from the days of the British Raj, but still fundamentally reflect the British Indian Army. Infantry battalions are composed of pure, mixed and totally mixed companies. "Pure" companies are comprised of Gurkhas or Sikhs, for example, while "mixed" companies reflect different ethnic groups. Three attempts have been made toward total integration of the army. Such integration would allow for continued unit integrity in the event a number of service members would not fight in a civil disturbance in their region.

Generally, the government has minimized employing the army in civil conflicts, yet a countervailing trend is evident. This trend can be seen in both counter-insurgency efforts in the Northeast, as well as New Delhi's use of the military in Kashmir and the Punjab. The army's missions include not only internal security, but also safeguarding Indian borders from external threats. As India's major perceived threats include China and Pakistan, for Indian planners a larger Indian army is required to guard against a potential two front war.

During the struggle for independence, Mahatma Gandhi saw no need for a military force. Yet, the Kashmir, Hyderabad and Goa experiences all proved to Nehru that there was a real

need for the military.<sup>88</sup> And in 1962, the Sino-Indian Border War changed Nehru's anti-colonial nonalignment stance. Non-aligned India in reality was a de facto U.S. "ally," allowing the United States to establish a Military Assistance Group (MAG) and conduct joint U.S.-Commonwealth-India exercises.<sup>89</sup>

India's strategic environment drastically changed after the Sino-Indian Border Conflict. This conflict proved to be a watershed for the Army. As indicated in Chapter II, Defence Minister Krishna Menon had maintained the force in a weak state on the Northeast border, while most of the Indian troops faced Pakistan. Chinese soldiers breached the seemingly impenetrable Himalayan passes, pouncing on a totally unprepared Indian Army. The 1962 war changed the importance of the defense policy. The military now had two fronts; Pakistan was not India's only challenge in the region.

Before the Chinese invasion, Nehru believed that a weak military force was an opportunity to reinforce his view of non-alignment and a non-aggressive policy. He seemed to feel that a weak military would keep his newly created nation

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<sup>88</sup> Hardgrave, *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Country*, pp. 42-43; Barnds, *India, Pakistan, and the Great Powers*, pp. 119, 121. Minor internal conflicts occurred during the early years of independence: Pakistan and India fought a brief war over Kashmir (1948). Hyderabad (1948) yielded after a "police action." Goa (1961) was under colonial rule before forcible inclusion in greater India.

<sup>89</sup> Joint air exercises were held in 1963.



free of war. As a consequence of the Chinese invasion, a number of significant changes occurred: the military became a popular career for the growing middle class; the army doubled its force size; and both the Navy and Air Force grew to adapt to shifts in defense attitudes. The result was modernization of forces, planning, and R&D; Army troops were no longer merely border guards.

Although the Chinese attack in 1962 ended in military humiliation for the Indian Army, two more wars were to be fought in the next seven years. India effectively demonstrated the use of its growing military strength. The 1965 Pakistan-Indian War ended in a stalemate, but by 1971, the Indian military achieved superiority over Pakistan. Politically, India won by "crushing the oppressive Pakistani leader" in 1971 where, as the stories of Pakistani repression reached the western portion of the country, the war damaged the government's image. India made a strategic gain in that it temporarily reduced a major military opponent to a minor power.

Since independence, India has maintained a policy of encouraging indigenous production with selected weapon imports. General K. Sunderji, former Commander-in-Chief, feels that the Army's strength is in the numbers (force size) and in mobility:

We are keen to develop our own systems indigenously and look to imports only when we are forced to, our acquisitions do tend to lag behind those of potential

adversaries in those areas and also impose a severe drain on our available resources.<sup>90</sup>

Although New Delhi has succeeded in obtaining weaponry from both the Soviet Union and western countries, India has had difficulty keeping pace with western technology and has experienced problems in translating indigenous R&D into hardware. In the past, this problem has been in part due to the government's red tape and a shortage of "production engineers."<sup>91</sup>

The second portion of Gen. Sunderji's statement refers to "potential adversaries." Realistically, Pakistan, as a potential threat, is far from being "ahead" of India. The *Hindu*, in a recent comparison of Pakistani and Indian military forces, indicated that in quantity, India far out-numbers the Pakistan military.<sup>92</sup> On the other hand, as a result of U.S. arms transfers to Pakistan, Islamabad has considerably improved the quality of Pakistani armed forces equipment.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Pushpinder Singh, "The Indian Army Today: Colour and Firepower," *Asian Defence Journal*, April 1987, p. 23.

<sup>91</sup> "India: Indigenous Programs Flourish Amid Defense Modernization," *International Defense Review*, April 1986, p. 436. According to the author of the article, New Delhi has been working towards a solution and established an increasing role for the private sector.

<sup>92</sup> The *Hindu* is a national paper, published in Madras.

<sup>93</sup> "Pakistan's Proxy War in Kashmir," *The Hindu International Edition*, 26 May 1990, p. 9. See Appendix A for detailed comparison.

As the Indian Army has modernized, the demand for high technology has grown. The country produces battlefield surveillance radars and the army radio engineered network (AREN) communications system. At least two factors contribute to India's modernization of the army: the need to maintain combat readiness vis-a-vis potential adversaries, and cost effectiveness. General Sunderji sees another potential factor, one which so far has apparently been avoided, "upgrading for the sake of upgrading."<sup>94</sup>

Infantry regiments are also equipped with machine guns, howitzers, and mortars in addition to the Carl Gustav 84mm anti-tank weapon, 106mm RCL guns (on jeeps) SS-11-B1 and Milan wire guided anti-tank missiles. The infantry has seen increased mechanization in the past 15 years. Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) were first introduced in the 1971 Indo-Pakistan conflict; now India produces a Soviet model BMP-2 infantry combat vehicle. Following the 1965 conflict, where Indian tank regiments were outclassed (suitable only for police action), the Indian government contracted for Soviet-built T-54 tanks. Establishing a heavy vehicles factory, the Indian government today produces the "Arjun" main battle tank (MBT) which will replace the current armored equipment during the 1990s. As indicated on page 54, Soviet

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<sup>94</sup> Singh, "The Indian Army Today," p. 23.

origin equipment in the Indian Army and Air Force is also very significant.

In addition to the army, the Indians maintain a sizeable and formidable Air Force. The most significant addition to the Indian Air Force is the MiG-29. This aircraft uses top-of-the-line technology which at the time of the first sale, was not even available for export to the Warsaw Pact nations.<sup>95</sup> India's purchase came as the Pakistanis had received renewed U.S. military assistance including the acquisition of F-16s. New Delhi had been negotiating with the United States to purchase F-16s, but selected the MiG-29s at a better price and received the desired complete technology package from the Soviets.

As with the Army, India's Air Force has been diversifying its equipment acquisition. Purchases have included not only Soviet aircraft, but France's Mirage 2000s (Vajras) and Britain's Harriers. HAL produces most avionic and navigational aids, and some air defense systems improvements.

## **2. Indian Naval Buildup**

Historically, Indian military pride has rested with its Army; India did not have its own naval heritage.

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<sup>95</sup> This is not the first incident of Soviet arms transfers to non-Warsaw Pact countries prior to listing on the East Bloc or Chinese order of battle. Other examples include the sale of MiG-21s, MiG-25s, and MiG-27s to India.

Throughout the colonial period, Great Britain sailed the seas, providing security for India from naval attack. Consequently, the Indian military had little background or experience in establishing a naval force. Without an indigenous historical legacy the Navy received minimal political and economic support. However, since the early 1980s the Navy has been working diligently to build up its two fleets and modernize the force. Force modernization works to support an expanding naval role to secure India's seaboards which extend over 7500 miles.<sup>96</sup> Given the uncertain future environment, Indian defense analysts see today's naval mission as four-fold:

1. To safeguard the Indian coastline and vital installations in the vicinity of the coastline against both surface and submarine threats.
2. To safeguard the flow of trade into and out of Indian ports during limited war situations.
3. To restrict the naval activities of the potential adversary during limited war.
4. To be in a position to assist island republics of the Indian Ocean--notably Mauritius, the Seychelles, Sri Lanka--in case they seek Indian assistance, particularly against threats of subversion.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> M.P. Awati, "Emerging Security Issues in the Indian Ocean: An Indian Perspective," *Superpower Rivalry in the Indian Ocean: Indian and American Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 104. See Appendix B for Indian power projection map.

<sup>97</sup> Awati, "Emerging Security Issues," p. 104. The 1987-1990 Sri Lankan intervention illustrates the mission. Additionally, the Seychelles and the Maldives have been subjected to coup attempts since 1982.

Throughout the 1960s, the Navy's budget allocation remained at four percent of the total Indian defense budget.<sup>98</sup> Just as the 1962 Sino-Indian Border Dispute resulted in a shift in national priorities in favor of the Army, the 1971 Bangladesh Crisis provided a watershed for the Indian Navy. First, the Navy recognized shortcomings in tactics and secondly, the crisis demonstrated the importance of having a maritime power projection capability. Maritime power in turn works hand in glove with India's overall goals of international recognition, prestige and power projection in the region.

However, an effective naval power projection must include a fully trained marine force. The lack of an amphibious capability (highlighted during the 1971 conflict) has not yet been resolved.<sup>99</sup> A dedicated, well-trained amphibious force remains an important determinant in power projection. One major constraint on acquiring this capability can be attributed to Army-Navy rivalry. The army's stand is firm; "any line battalion with a crash course in dry and wet shod training is capable of carrying out marine operations."<sup>100</sup> Despite recognizing the need for amphibious

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<sup>98</sup> Awati, "Emerging Security Issues," p. 101.

<sup>99</sup> An attempted amphibious landing at Cox Bazar in 1971 tragically ended after an amphibious ship sent Gurkha troops to their death, drowned in what was supposed to be waist high water.

<sup>100</sup> Awati, "Emerging Security Issues," p. 107.

capability, the Ministry of Defence waited until 1986 to organize the first of its marine regiments. The military is taking significant steps to address this limitation and is forming a second marine unit.

The Indian naval buildup has resulted in not only top-of-the-line Soviet transfers, but has focused on two other important components of arms expansion: diversification of sources and indigenous construction. The following table illustrates a tilt toward foreign naval purchases, with some diversion from traditional purchases solely from the Soviet Union.<sup>101</sup> Purchases from Moscow generally accommodate India by way of technology transfer and licensing for local production.

As evidenced by Table 4.1, the Soviets have provided extensively to the Indian Navy, including destroyers, frigates, corvettes, amphibious craft, submarines and anti-submarine warfare (ASW) units. Although one of India's priorities is indigenous production, there is a lack of capability in the production of naval vessels. Efforts also include designs for aircraft carriers, but India's ultimate goal is independent designs with indigenously developed technology. In 1989, Indian naval acquisitions from the

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<sup>101</sup> India's major arms suppliers expenditures from 1976-1985 include (1985 US\$ million): USSR--\$10,064; UK--\$2,465; France--\$1,070; US--\$137. Calculated from figures provided in Brzoska and Ohlson, *Arms Transfers to the Third World, 1971-1985*, p. 343.

**TABLE 4.1**  
**INDIAN NAVY ACQUISITIONS**

<u>NAVAL COMPONENT</u>	<u>INDIGENOUS CONSTRUCTION</u>	<u>FOREIGN PURCHASE</u>
NAVAL AIR		
Attack:		8 Sea Harrier (UK)
ASW:		50 Chetak (Sov)
		25 Ka-25 (Sov)
		(Hormone)
		90 Ka-27 (Sov Helix)
MR:		18 BN-2
		6 Il-38 (Sov May)
		10 TU-142M (Sov)
		(Bear F)
		6 Sea King (UK)
SURFACE COMBATANTS		
Carriers:		2 Viraat, Vikrant
		(UK Hermes,
		UK Glory)
Destroyers:		5 Rajput DDG (Sov)
		(Mod-Kashin II)
Frigates:	3 Godavari FFH	6 Nilgiri
		(UK Leander)
		1 Talwar
		(UK Whitby)
	1 Khukri (ASUW)	8 Kamorta
		(Sov Petya)
		2 Beas
		(UK Leopard)
Corvettes:		3 Vijay Durg
		(Sov Nanuchka II)
		5 Veer
		(Sov Tarantul)
Missile Craft:		13 Vidyut
		(Sov Osa)
Amphibious:	1 Magar LST	9 Ghorpad LSM
		(Sov Polnocny C)
SUBMARINES		
SSGN:		2 Chakra, Chitra
		(Sov Charlie-I)
		(leased)
SS:		6 Sindhughosh
		(Sov Kilo)
		2 Shishumar
		(FRG T-209/1500)
		8 Kursura
		(Sov Foxtrot)

Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Military Balance: 1989-1990, pp. 159-160.



Soviets included three additional diesel submarines, with two more anticipated this year (1990).<sup>102</sup> Likewise, New Delhi has received five corvettes and four more are expected for delivery in 1990. Purchases from South Korea included three offshore patrol craft.

For several reasons, India is working to diversify its arms sources. Diversification allows for an improved Indian negotiating position during arms sales discussions. Secondly, New Delhi may be unsure of continued reliable support from Moscow. Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, has announced reduced support for arms transfers to the Third World, although there is little evidence that such a policy change has occurred. With international issues possibly becoming more North-South issues, vice East-West, India could, at some point, be in opposition to the USSR. Thirdly, the West has technology which the Indians need for indigenous construction and design. One current example is French-Indian discussion to explore the possibility of selling the French Dassault Rafale-M to New Delhi for its new aircraft carriers. India is also contemplating a Light Combat Aircraft of French assisted design.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> The Indian Navy is likely to continue expansion of its submarine force with diesel boats vice nuclear powered submarines.

<sup>103</sup> Tony Banks, ed. "Country Survey: India," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 26 May 1990, p. 1035.

Thus, India is apt to continue with its current policy of purchasing Soviet equipment, with limited purchases from the West. The Soviets have been willing to provide technology transfer to the Indians, which has made Soviet equipment an attractive purchase, in addition to the generally lower prices. More recently though, New Delhi chose France's proposal over both the Soviet and British plans for India's ambition--to build a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. A Navy official has indicated that no commitment had been made in the design of the aircraft carrier.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, considerable debate is likely to generate a decision in favor of a nuclear power plant for India aircraft carriers.<sup>105</sup> Soviet technology development will inevitably determine the type of aircraft and carrier built in the next 15 years.<sup>106</sup> Technology transfer is evidence that the Soviet-Indian relationship is a productive partnership. It is India's way of meeting its own intermediate desire for technology.

India has an active indigenous construction program to support Indian naval expansion plans. Indian efforts include

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<sup>104</sup> Arun Prakash, "A Carrier Force for the Indian Navy: Rational and Options," paper delivered at Naval War College, 4 May 1990, pp. 16-17.

<sup>105</sup> Prakash, "A Carrier Force for the Indian Navy," pp. 19-20.

<sup>106</sup> The Indian Navy anticipates production of at least three aircraft carriers in the next 15 years.

submarines, destroyers, frigates, corvettes, amphibious craft and patrol craft as shown on Table 4.2.

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**TABLE 4.2**  
**INDIAN SHIPYARD CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS 1988-89**

**GARDEN REACH SHIPBUILDERS:**

FFG: 3 (unnamed) 'Project 16' design  
FFLG/Corvette: 8 (6 unnamed) "Khukri" Class  
LCP: 4 "Lurssen 45" Class  
LST: 1 Gharial, "Margar" Class  
AOR: 1 Rajaba Gan Palan, Bremer-Vukan design  
AGOR: 2 "Sankhayak" Class  
1 (unnamed) New Type

**GOA SHIPYARD:**

LCP: 4 (1 unnamed) "Vikram"/Type 957 (For Coast Guard)

**HINDUSTAN SHIPYARD:**

LCP: 5 "Neptune"/Tacoma design

**MAZAGON DOCKYARD:**

SS: 2 (1 unnamed) "209/Type 1500"  
DDG: 1 (unnamed) 'Project 15' design  
(first of three planned)  
FFLG: 2 "Khukri" Class  
(added units to be ordered in 1990-92)  
LCP: 3 (2 unnamed) "Neptune"/Tacoma design  
AG: 1 Diving support ship

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Source: Thakur, "India as a Regional Seapower," p. 6.

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This does not mean that New Delhi has shelved purchasing foreign equipment. On the contrary, due to a lag in technology, fewer resources and a slowing economy, India will continue to acquire the most recent, technically advanced

submarines, minesweepers, and maritime aircraft from foreign sources.<sup>107</sup>

The Indian buildup will ensure its predominant position as a regional power in the Indian Ocean. For some states, this may constitute a security concern. Captain Richard Sharpe, editor of *Jane's Fighting Ships 1990-91* volume, has recently expressed considerable concern about India's naval buildup:

Apologists for the program point out that India is an insecure country, with an abiding sense of the fragility of the Indian Union, and that only military strength can give it the self-confidence needed to take the risks necessary to put its relations with neighboring states on a secure footing...There has also been what looks like an orchestrated attempt by various Indian nationals, writing in journals to understate the significance of the naval expansion. For different reasons, the military incursions into Sri Lanka and the Maldives were both justified, but the willingness to project power has caused a tremor of anxiety as far away as the eastern ASEAN states and rather stronger reactions in the other Indian Ocean island groups of the Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and the Seychelles. In the search for control of natural resources in the region, India clearly intends to be in a strong position when the time comes to exploit them.<sup>108</sup>

As referred to above, the suppression of the attempted coup in the Maldives illustrated a significant rapid reaction and logistical support by Indian military forces. New Delhi demonstrated a growing long-range airlift capacity which is,

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<sup>107</sup> Denis Warner, "Jane's Startling Look at Moscow and New Delhi," *Asia-Pacific Defense Reporter*, July 1990, p. 37.

<sup>108</sup> Warner, "Jane's Startling Look at Moscow and New Delhi," p. 37.

to date, exceeded only by the Soviet Union and the United States.<sup>109</sup>

One November 3, 1988, two Maldivians, aided by 400 Tamil mercenaries attempted to overthrow Maldivian President Gayoom. Escaping from the Presidential Palace, President Gayoom requested assistance from the United States, United Kingdom, India, and Pakistan. After deciding on a military course of action, New Delhi informed The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) members, the United States and USSR of India's decision.<sup>110</sup> Within six hours, the 50th 'Para' Brigade (approximately 300 personnel) was on the move from India to Male, the Maldivian capital. By 5 November, India had lifted 3000 soldiers to the island. Two days is, indeed, quite a capability for a developing country. The mercenaries attempted a sea retreat on the Progress Light. The INS Godavari and INS Betwa sailed toward the mercenaries' vessel, engaging the Progress Light about 90 kilometers from Colombo, Sri Lanka. The mercenaries surrendered on 6 November.

Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, justified the military action as:

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<sup>109</sup> Gregory Copley, "South Asia: Zone of the New Great Powers," *Defense and Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1989, p. 9.

<sup>110</sup> SAARC includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

...a commitment to the promotion of peace and stability...in keeping with our belief that countries in the region can resolve their problems in a spirit of friendship<sup>111</sup> and cooperation, free of outside influences.

Prime Minister Gandhi responded to the fears of neighboring states: "Are we to sit back and watch a democratically elected government of a friendly, neighbouring country being pulled down by alien forces? No."<sup>112</sup> India clearly sees a role for itself in the region despite its neighbors' fear of spreading Indian hegemony. New Delhi's view of its actions is articulated in its version of the Monroe ("Rajiv") doctrine:

1. No country in South Asia should seek military aid from external powers.
2. No external power should intervene in disputes between South Asian states or in the domestic problems of those states.
3. No South Asian state other than India should arbitrate the disputes and problems in South Asia.<sup>113</sup>

Although India's action was requested by President Gayoom and India cited Article 1(C) of the SAARC charter to intervene on the Maldivians' behalf, smaller nations remain concerned for their own security.<sup>114</sup> Whether the Indian military will use

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<sup>111</sup> *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 17 November 1988, p. 15.

<sup>112</sup> *The Hindu*, 19 November 1988, p. 1.

<sup>113</sup> S. Bilveer, "Operation Cactus: India's 'Prompt Action' in Maldives," *Asian Defense Journal*, February 1989, p. 33.

<sup>114</sup> The Charter's Article 1(C) states "To promote and strengthen self-reliance among the countries of South Asia."

its strength and organizational capability in power projection to overthrow as well as save a government, will be seen in future regional crises. India, for the present, appears to be in a position to act as the regional "police force."

India's intentions continue to be translated into action by rising defense spending and in current construction projects. Ravi Rikhye writes that the fourth period of Indian Naval expansion began in 1978, adding not only Soviet weaponry, but also Indian built and Western purchased ships and aircraft.<sup>115</sup>

When released, India's 1985 Defense Plan drew considerable interest. Indian military involvement in the region has also caused international focus on India's growing naval capabilities.<sup>116</sup> Although smaller regional nations express concern over India's naval expansion, India has tended to play down its capability in the wake of these concerns.

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<sup>115</sup> Ravi Rikhye, "Nobody Asked Me, But..." *Proceedings*, March 1990, p. 77. The first period of expansion was from 1947-1956 with British equipment. The second period from 1956-1962 was in part, a reaction to CENTO and SEATO, drove New Delhi to ensure a 3:1 ratio over the Pakistan Navy. The third period was from 1966-72 as a result of the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962 and the 1965 Indian-Pakistani War. With cheap Soviet credit, Navy purchases included eight Foxtrot submarines, ten Petya corvettes, ten Osa missile boats and support ships.

<sup>116</sup> Examples of growing capability and willingness to use force was demonstrated in the 1986-87 mobilization against Pakistan; 1988 Maldives intervention; Sri Lankan intervention; 1990 crisis with Pakistan over Kashmir.

### 3. Assessing Mid-Term Indian Naval Development

The Indian Navy is the only force in the littoral region with two aircraft carriers with solid plans to increase the total to five by 2005.<sup>117</sup> India also plans to double its frigate force by 1995 and construct new bases at Karwar (south of Bombay) and the Andaman Islands. Naval construction is becoming more indigenous, incorporating Soviet, British, German, Dutch, and French technologies. India's frigate force includes the British designed Leander class (six built in India) and the Indian designed Godavari class; corvettes are built in India using French designs. The recent purchase of the second aircraft carrier is only an intermediate step to indigenous production of "air-capable" ships. India has acquired its first Soviet-built Kilo class submarine, replacing the Foxtrot submarines. India has also purchased German submarines and has built a number of boats using German designs. In addition to the acquisition of their first Charlie I SSGN from the Soviets in 1988, India and the USSR are arranging a lease for an additional three (possibly four) Charlie submarines in the near term. Additionally, India is also attempting to develop its own nuclear propulsion system

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<sup>117</sup> Rikhye, "Nobody," p. 78. By the year 2000, the author projects the following expansion: two to five aircraft carriers (projecting the loss of one carrier); 16 of 24 submarines; 40 major surface combatants, mostly corvettes. Rikhye does not identify what, if any, assistance will be provided by the Soviets.



for the fleet, although diesel submarine propulsion appears more viable for India.

Regardless of New Delhi's intentions, Admiral Ram Tahilani, former Navy Chief, has planned for three to five aircraft carriers, 40 major surface combatants and 24 submarines by the year 2000.<sup>118</sup> For now, a third carrier is expected to be commissioned by 1997. It will probably replace one of the aging carriers currently in the fleet. Rikhye sees the goal of 24 submarines as unobtainable in the next ten years due to cancellation of the indigenous construction program for Type-209 boats for domestic political reasons.<sup>119</sup> *Asian Defence Journal*, however, indicates that two Type-209 submarines are under construction.<sup>120</sup> With today's Kilos, Type-209s and possibly four leased Soviet SSGNs, it is conceivable that the Indians could well be on their way to the desired total by the year 2000. However, construction plans do not indicate the attainment of that goal through indigenous building.

India's power projection is not without limitations. The bulk of naval spending is in purchasing new equipment and not maintenance. Rikhye writes that the Navy's capabilities are limited by short duration (14 days) on station and a two

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<sup>118</sup> Rikhye, "Nobody," p. 77.

<sup>119</sup> Rikhye, "Nobody," p. 78.

<sup>120</sup> Thakur, "India as a Regional Power," p. 10.

week limit on steaming time.<sup>121</sup> The shortage mainly appears to be in support. Rikhye also cites shortage of spare parts and personnel, ground crews and pilots.

However, two points should be noted. First, India's last major war with Pakistan in 1971 was less than two weeks. Additionally, the Maldives intervention was less than four days. Therefore, the Navy's fourteen day limit would not be a concern if comparable "conflicts" were fought. Secondly, similar arguments regarding fleet readiness or limitations have been made in the past. Similar claims were made about the United Kingdom prior to the Falklands. Thus, India, with its limitations, continues to work toward what Indian analysts see as a "superpower navy," certainly the most powerful in South Asia today.<sup>122</sup>

In an attempt to compensate for perceived "deficiencies," the Indian defense budget has grown significantly since the early Nehru days, but even more noticeable is the military growth since 1982. Overall, the defense budget as a percent of Gross National Product (GNP) remained relatively constant through 1987, fluctuating between 3.5% and 3.9% of the GNP.<sup>123</sup> Allocations within the military

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<sup>121</sup> Rikhye, "Nobody," p. 78.

<sup>122</sup> Additional aircraft carriers and a strengthened submarine force are two areas of needed expansion and modernization.

<sup>123</sup> See Appendix C for a comparison of defense spending by India and its neighbors.

have shifted slightly with the Air Force and Department of Defence Production and Supplies receiving cuts in the 1988 budget. Arguments have existed over allocation amounts to Research and Development, but as defense programs are increasingly able to produce equipment indigenously, improved military efficiency and modernization expenditures will become a more acceptable use of funds. One possible solution to this disagreement would be to purchase the high technology equipment and reduce costly indigenous production of high value items. Thus, top-of-the-line technology could be purchased and R&D could use already available data.<sup>124</sup>

With defense plans to increase mobility and modernize, the budget allocation reflects the growth. In 1982, the Navy's share was 11.26% (compared with 4% in thhe 1960s), by 1987 it rose to 13.2%, and 1988 figures at 13.55%, reflecting the planned steady increase to twenty percent over the next ten years.<sup>125</sup>

### **C. EMERGING ISSUES**

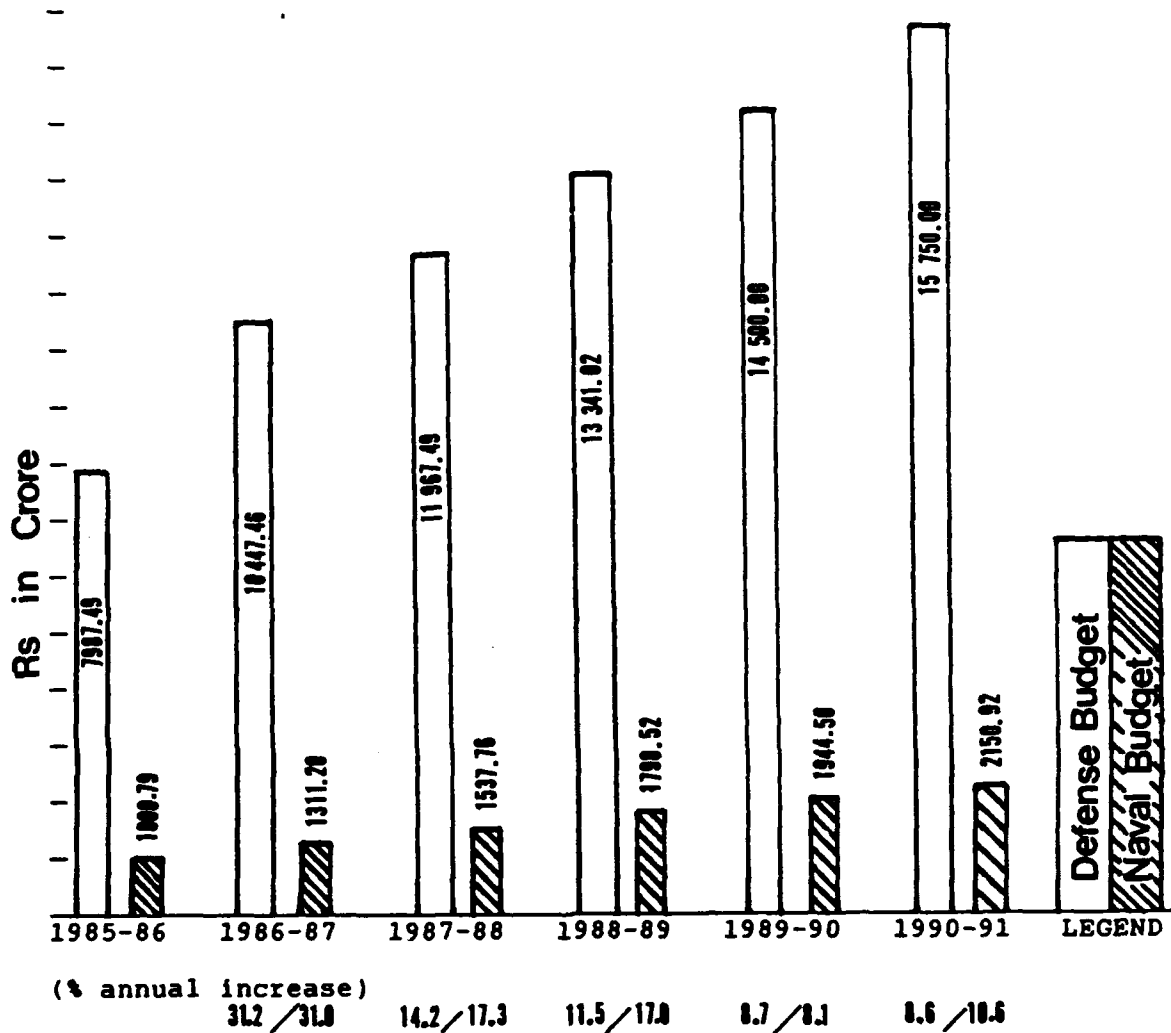
Regional issues in South Asia continue to concern India and its neighbors. The boom in arms sales in South and

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<sup>124</sup> This may be viewed as a compromise of "independence," but it appears that India has been previously willing to "overlook" this to attain its intermediate objectives to obtain needed technology.

<sup>125</sup> Copley, "South Asia: Zone of the New Great Powers," p. 28; Awati, "Emerging Security Issues," p. 105.

TABLE 4.3  
NAVAL EXPENDITURES  
(crore=10 million)



Source: Jane's Defence Weekly, 26 May 1990, p. 1027.

Southeast Asia seems to be a trend not easily curbed. Nuclear capability, as well as other potential forms of weaponry, draw concern from smaller nations. In light of increased tension in the region, perhaps SAARC, as a diplomatic forum, may calm some fears. It could potentially be an effective tool to diffuse and resolve difficult problems.

Concern exists about India as a cause of regional arms buildup in South and Southeast Asia. The nuclear issue in particular continues to worry many external leaders. The main anxiety of those nations already possessing nuclear capability lies in proliferation, while some Third World nations, such as India, see it as a power tool to aid their countries to counterbalance an adversary or a step towards major power status.

The nuclear threat posed in South Asia is an extremely sensitive issue. It may well be that India always intended to develop a nuclear capability. On the other hand, India may have viewed nuclear power in only peaceful applications until it saw a new threat from the PRC. When China exploded a nuclear device in 1964, India was "pushed" into developing a nuclear weapons capability. India exploded its nuclear device in 1974. Unsure of a major power nuclear umbrella, Pakistan now appears to have the capability to develop tactical nuclear weapons, although not officially acknowledging its capability. Once again, the nuclear issue has created an uncertainty.

Nuclear weapons might well be a source for regional instability.

Although New Delhi continues to say that its nuclear power is for "peaceful purposes," the country has developed a potential delivery system. In 1989, India test-fired its first Agni intermediate surface-to-surface ballistic missile (IRBM), bringing India into the "IRBM club." It may soon have an intercontinental ballistic missile capability with its current ability to produce nuclear weapons.<sup>126</sup> With a 1500 mile range, the IRBM is capable of reaching throughout South Asia and into the PRC.

South and Southeast Asian countries are wary of the uncertain future -- stability and growth or increased conflict and fear. Concern exists among the smaller nations in Southeast Asia with the potential reduction of the U.S. military presence in the region and the Indian Naval buildup.<sup>127</sup> Consequently several of these South and Southeast Asian countries are developing their own militaries through arms buildup and modernization.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> China, France, Israel, the USSR and the United States are countries which have an IRBM capability.

<sup>127</sup> Gregory Copley, "The New Era," *Defense and Foreign Affairs*, March 1990, p. 13.

<sup>128</sup> Gwen Robinson, "Arms Boom in Asia," *Pacific Defence Reporter*, June 1990, pp. 45-46; Iftikhar H. Malik, "The Pakistan-U.S. Security Relationship: Testing Bilateralism," *Asian Survey*, March 1990, pp. 289-290.

SAARC may be a way to relax some tension in the region, but the smaller nations need reassurance that India is not going to "bully" them. Although unlikely at present, SAARC could provide an acceptable starting point for Indian confidence-building measures. The Indians provided responsive assistance to the Maldives government when it requested assistance during the 1987 coup. India also aided the Sri Lankan government, but recently removed Indian troops from the island after considerable pressure from the Sri Lankan government.<sup>129</sup>

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

India is concerned with threats to its security and regional role. Its growing economic base permitted the recent military buildup. The slowing economy since 1987 has caused some to doubt the projected growth rate of the military, particularly the ambitious Naval program. Nevertheless, despite slow economic growth, military expenditures continue to increase in real terms. Both the Army and Navy received higher allocations.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> See Mohammed Ayoob, "India in South Asia," *World Policy Journal*, Winter 1989-90, p. 123. The Sri Lanka government requested New Delhi's assistance to fight insurgents in Sri Lanka.

<sup>130</sup> Increased spending could be attributed to the army which is normally more labor intensive than technology oriented. Additionally, military activity in Sri Lanka and Kashmir may account for a significant portion of the increase.

New Delhi has not balked at the use of force in Indian foreign policy. Indian leaders have had a historical concern for regional predominance. Early examples include the 1947 fight for Kashmir and incorporation of the Indian princely states, and the 1961 battle for Goa, while more recent cases include Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. India has maintained a high profile during the 1980s and its neighbors have begun to express concern over India's growing military strength. Since 1971, India has been striving to build a first class navy. It correctly analyzed the importance of seapower and apparently agreed with Mahan's factors that make seapower development possible.<sup>131</sup> Even though Indian leaders did not recognize the importance of seapower during the early years of independence, they did feel that Britain's legacy to them was not only legitimacy of self-government, but legitimacy as the regional powerbroker. This legitimacy appears, in turn, to be translated into reserving the right to intervene, as in the Maldives and Sri Lanka. Among other purposes, intervention has demonstrated the naval forces' regional power projection capability to promote or defend democracy as in the case of the Maldives, and failure in dealing with the insurgency in the case of Sri Lanka.

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<sup>131</sup> A.T. Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power upon History: 1660-1783*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1943), Chapter 1.



With projected expansion of its naval forces, India may enhance its mobilization capability through a third naval base and fleet at the southern tip of India.<sup>132</sup> There is also likely to be an expansion of the two current fleets, especially the western fleet and submarine force. This would solve logistics problems, increasing effectiveness and provide security for surface vessels. India could project its influence not only to the south, but provide flexibility eastward or westward. Even if the force would not grow, the military would be more effective.

As India enhances its military capability and options, it poses a dilemma for New Delhi, as it generates greater concern in South and Southeast Asia. Perhaps, with its slowing economy, India could focus more attention on economic ties in the changing strategic environment. Developing working relationships to foster a more economically stable region should be one of India's first steps in confidence-building measures. India dominates the region, but the promotion of SAARC in South and Southeast Asia could lead to improved relations, and subsequently, diminish regional tension.

Currently, India's military expansion has reinforced fears among smaller nations in the region. For these nations, a significant drawdown of U.S. military presence enhances

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<sup>132</sup> See Appendix D for Indian military installations.

regional concerns that India might act "uninhibited" as the regional hegemonic power.

The Indian Navy increases New Delhi's options and tools of foreign policy. As an effective tool, India must learn how to build the confidence of its neighbors without appearing to menace regional governments.

## **V. PROSPECTS FOR RELATIONS IN THE 1990s**

India is rapidly developing into a major regional power, capable of influencing events throughout the Indian Ocean region. A growing military capability sets India in a stronger regional negotiating position. However, New Delhi must improve its regional bilateral relations. As a regional leader, India must also look outward, to develop a deeper understanding of the global aspect of bilateral relations in today's new environment.

The purpose of this concluding chapter is to provide an overall assessment of Indian military development and how it may impact future relations with the United States. The chapter will begin with a summary of the key points in the previous chapters and conclude with a brief indication of the prospects for India's power projection capability and possible new directions for the U.S.-India relationship in the 1990s.

### **A. KEY POINTS**

As discussed in Chapter II, five key areas have adversely affected the United States-India relationship. Two interrelated areas of contention, the Soviet Union and Pakistan, may now be key areas from which to develop increased

harmony, and provide starting points to work on mutual interests.

U.S. policy towards Pakistan has been dominated by the Soviet threat and America's commitment to containing communism. Pakistan's role in U.S. foreign policy has diminished as the Soviet threat has declines. Diminishing U.S.-Soviet rivalry in the post-Cold War has eased Washington's concern over India's tilt toward the Soviet Union, creating an opportunity for better U.S.-India relations.

Under present conditions, China remains an issue which will not significantly affect U.S.-India relations. In the past, the United States has tended to be pro-Chinese in foreign policy considerations. Nevertheless, as China's position as the fulcrum in the Sino-Soviet-U.S. triangle becomes less critical for world stability, other bilateral relationships may take on new significance. The fragile relationship between the PRC and India still rests on a foundation of unresolved issues which have in the past resulted in armed violence between the two countries.

Two key points of contention in U.S.-India relations examined in this thesis will remain throughout the 1990s: neutralization of the Indian Ocean and India's nuclear weapons capability. The United States is a commercial, maritime power which depends on the uninhibited use of the world's oceans to

maintain its economic health. India, as a regional power, wants to be the dominant force in the Indian Ocean region.

Since the turn of the century, the United States has never accepted a regional power to provide security for U.S. interests since the turn of the century. Thus, until Washington can be convinced that it can rely on India to safeguard SLOCs and provide regional stability, a U.S. military presence will remain in the region.

Since India's nuclear explosion in 1974, New Delhi has had a nuclear weapon capability. India's refusal to sign the NPT makes it a potential source for other Third World nations to acquire a nuclear capability. The United States is strongly opposed to the further spread of nuclear weapons. Until this critical issue is resolved, closer military ties are unlikely.

The Indo-Soviet military relationship is likely to change in the near future due to the economic difficulties in the Soviet Union and the resulting force reductions in Europe. The Indian military is heavily weighted toward Soviet hardware. Although the Army and the Air Force are capable of indigenous production, the Navy construction program is not currently as active in producing its own hulls.

For sustained power projection capability, a strong economy is necessary. India's economic growth soared in the 1980s. In relation to defense spending, recent constraints on the economy have not curtailed military expenditures. Since most of India's defense spending is focused on technology and

light industry, defense expenditures may have positively impacted India's growth and investment.<sup>133</sup>

As a result of government spending decisions, India has been in an position to develop its military option, especially its naval forces, as a foreign policy tool. The Indian Navy aids New Delhi as it strives to attain India's "regional" policy objectives. To garner increasing prestige, New Delhi flexes not only a conventional force, but also its nuclear capability option.<sup>134</sup>

As insecurity mounts in the region, the smaller nations will need reassurance that India is not going to attempt to "bully" them; SAARC may be one way to relax some of the tension in the region.<sup>135</sup> While focusing on economic, cultural, and technological endeavors, smaller nation members might be able to use SAARC as a tool in dealing with India's regional predominance. However, until the organization can successfully contend with controversial bilateral issues, the

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<sup>133</sup> Robert E. Looney, "The Socio-Economic Impact of Defense Expenditures in the Middle East and South Asia," unpublished paper, 20 September 1990, p. 29.

<sup>134</sup> S. Bilveer, "AGNI: India Fires into the Missile Age," *Asian Defence Journal*, September 1989, p. 76.

<sup>135</sup> Rohitashwa Dubey, "Indophobia as the Ailment of SAARC," in *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, January-March 1988, p. 72. The thrust for developing SAARC lies not only in an interest in generating prosperity, but member countries hoped that the organization would provide a "regional voice" in the United Nations.

utility of SAARC as a forum for solving political differences will be minimal.<sup>136</sup>

## **B. UNITED STATES AND INDIA IN THE INDIAN OCEAN**

Except for the 1962-65 period, the United States and India have not had particularly close ties. U.S. policy toward the region has been vague, and national interests, generally, remain low. The major source of American interest in the region has been to counter Soviet advances and influence on the subcontinent, and to maintain freedom of navigation, including SLOC security.

The Indian Ocean SLOCs will grow in importance throughout the 1990s. Critical resources are shipped through the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian straits; valuable resources lie in the seabed. An Indian desire to exert more influence over the Indian Ocean region makes India a potential source of regional instability. Although India sees itself as a stabilizing regional force, doubts remain in the region and indeed as far away as Southeast Asia, not to mention Washington. The U.S.-India relationship has not been an easy one: given the issues discussed in this thesis, it appears that neither Washington nor New Delhi can take bilateral relations for granted. Enhancing fruitful ties between India and the United States

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<sup>136</sup> Peter J.S. Duncan, *The Soviet Union and India* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1989), p. 43. SAARC prohibits discussion of "bilateral and contentious issues."

requires constant work. Both nations must work to strengthen positive relationships, although troubling issues such as Diego Garcia, neutralization of the Indian Ocean, and nuclear weapons capabilities will undoubtedly remain.

Changes in the global political environment are providing the impetus for rekindling relations. Soviet "New Thinking" has brought about detente and the end of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Similarly, warming Sino-Soviet relations have resulted in a need for the reevaluation of their bilateral relations with other countries, such as India. Since 1988, Indo-Chinese relations have become somewhat more amicable. Although rising tension in the Middle East threatens to dampen the euphoria of warming relations worldwide, many nations continue to work bilaterally to establish a better understanding of their neighbors.

As this thesis has attempted to indicate, Washington needs to realize that it cannot expect India to do exactly what the United States wants. Nevertheless, American national interests, taking into consideration U.S. expectations of the region, must of course be Washington's top priority. In turn, New Delhi needs to recognize that U.S. concerns and subsequent decisions may not always parallel or coincide with India's interests. Given its global commitments, the United States requires continued, unrestricted sea lanes of communication in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf, while India does not want external actors to remain involved in regional affairs.



The dilemma here for India is that its military "high-handedness" and the increasing role of India's military in both internal and regional conflicts promotes belligerent solution not the "peaceful approach" to problem solving voiced by New Delhi. On the other hand, India will be able to negotiate from a position of strength in conflict resolution.

The U.S. policy of assisting Pakistan at the expense of India has been successful, perhaps bested illustrated by the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan. Nevertheless, close U.S.-Pakistan ties have created an atmosphere of animosity between Washington and New Delhi. Pakistan will always be the weaker power in the subcontinent. Perhaps our interests can now be better served in the region by supporting India. A recent U.S. decision to suspend military aid to Islamabad is certainly a move welcomed in New Delhi. The United States should reassess and adapt its Pakistan policy to the current strategic environment. In the best of all possible worlds, the United States would seek to align itself more fully with the strategic regional power (India) while seeking to balance that power by protecting the integrity of somewhat weaker states (particularly Pakistan).

The United States could also help regional stability through encouraging friendlier relations between New Delhi and Islamabad. Washington's dialogue with New Delhi could also

discourage Indian hostility toward Pakistan. The United States should encourage Indian action in moderation.<sup>137</sup>

The superpower rivalry and subsequent end of the Cold War has shifted the global strategic environment. At the regional level India has demonstrated a power projection capability with the Indian Navy carrying out limited actions in the Indian Ocean. Although Indian naval forces do not present an insurmountable threat to U.S. interests by themselves, India-U.S. relations today make it difficult to envision India in a "naval partnership" with America in the foreseeable future. Even in of Gorbachev's political agenda, the changing strategic environment will most likely not fully allow extremely close U.S.-India military ties.

Developing friendly bilateral ties between India and its neighbors is crucial to regional stability and prosperity. Although India's neighbors are concerned with the Indian Naval buildup, growth in the naval forces will undoubtedly continue until New Delhi attains its desired strength.

An issue that concerns India's neighbors is New Delhi's ability to enhance India's military independence, creating an emerging military-industrial complex. Indigenous construction

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<sup>137</sup> The potential exists for a situation similar to "Iran-Iraq" with Pakistan and India. The United States must carefully assess the cost of doing business with either nation.

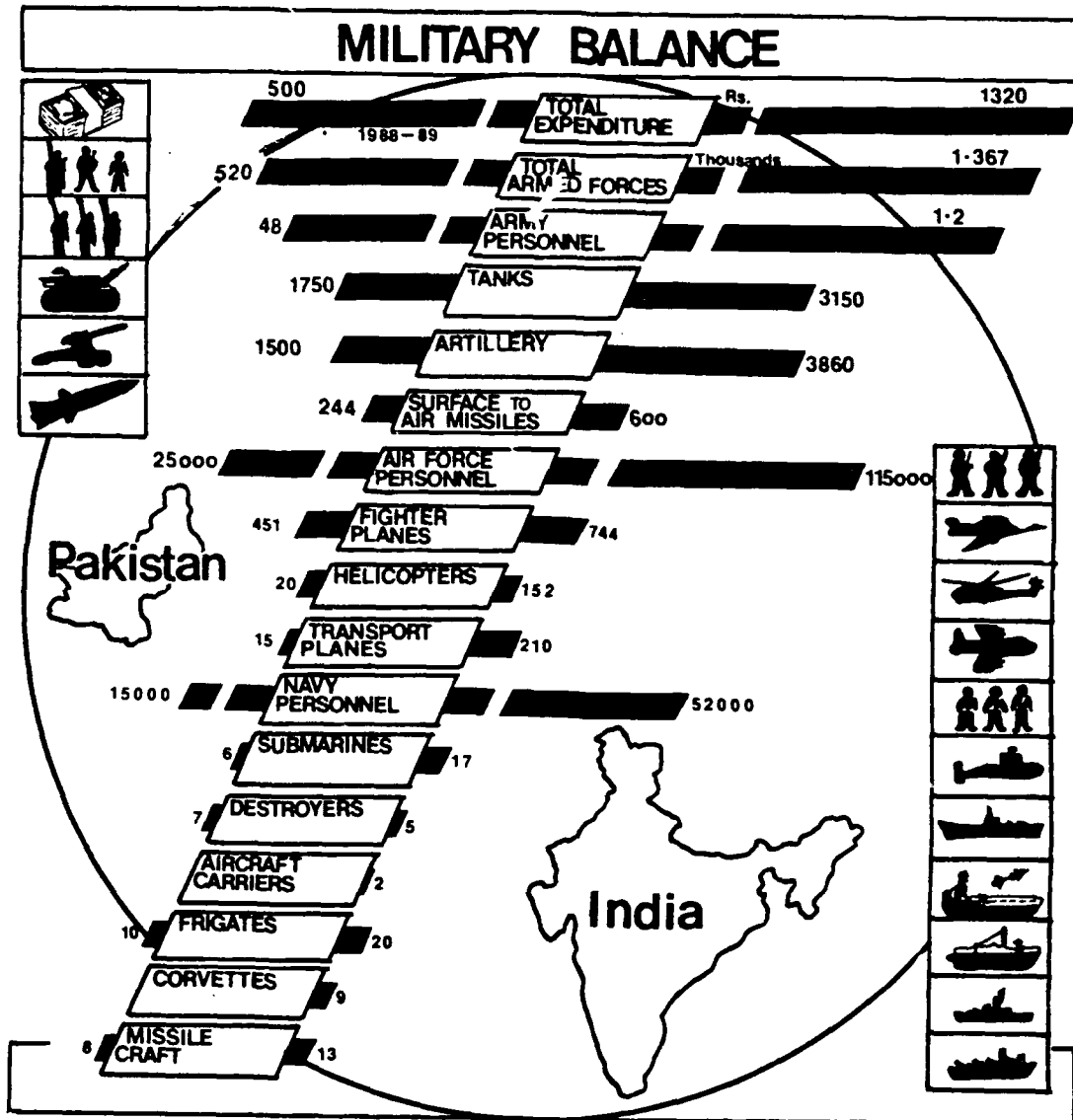
and technology may well weaken external restraints on Indian action.

Continuing the current round of port visits provides an opportunity to develop better U.S.-India military relations and expand the dialogue. Ultimately joint naval exercises should be considered.

Nevertheless, the United States must weigh very carefully the implications of being too closely associated with the emerging hegemonic power in the region. It is an open question whether Indian and U.S. interests are converging in the Indian Ocean. After all, the goal of "insulating" the Indian Ocean from external actors will continue to be a high priority of Indian foreign policy, even if it appears to be unattainable in the near future.

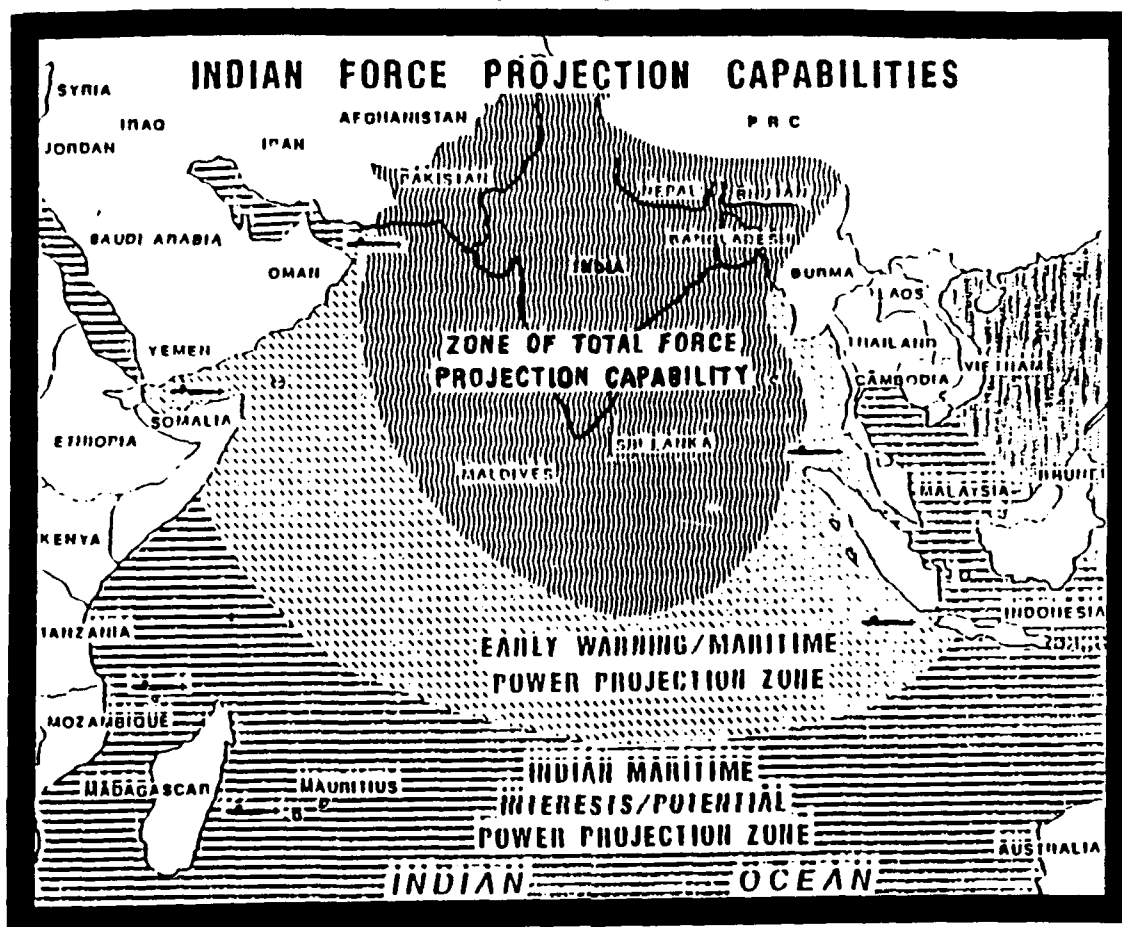
Certainly, a "naval partnership" is too big of a step. Although Americans and Indians share a variety of mutual interests, a number of areas continue to present barriers to improved relations. The United States and India have been acrimonious and distrustful of each other. A cultural gap exists which presents an added facet to the complex relationship. Finally, India is not willing to join in a "partnership" with the United States. The United States and India need a firmer basis to develop ties. The relationship must be based on trust and mutually satisfying experiences which can only be developed over a longer period of time.

# APPENDIX A



Source: THE HINDU, May 26, 1990.

# APPENDIX B



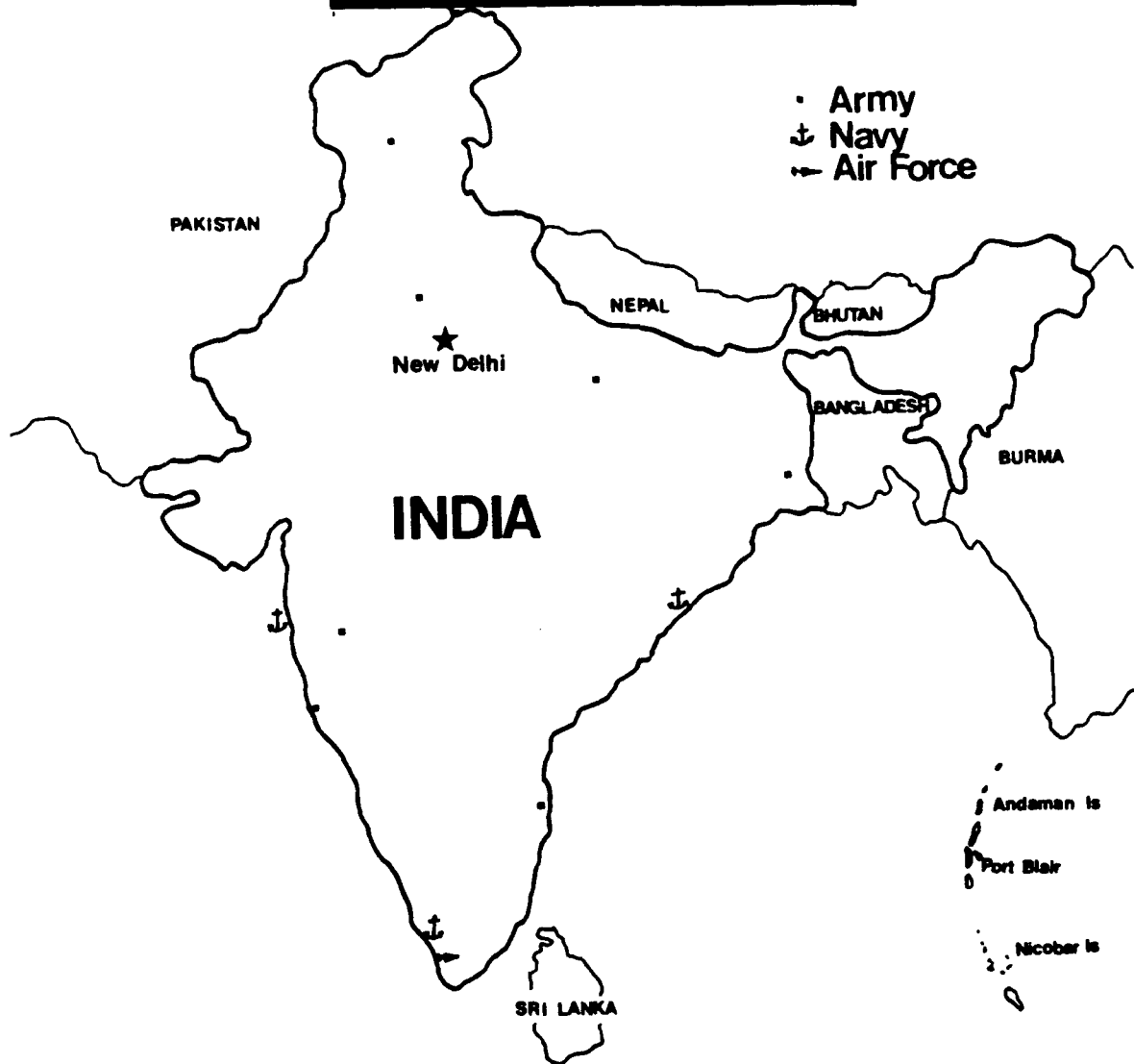
Source: Jerrold F. Elkin and W. Andrew Ritzel, "New Delhi's Indian Ocean Policy," Naval War College Review, Autumn 1987, p. 58.

SAARC DEFENSE EXPENDITURES

COUNTRY*	ME (millions) (US \$)	ARMED FORCES (thousands)	ME/ GNP %	ME/ CGE %	ME/ CAPITA (US \$)	ARMED FORCES/ 1000
BANGLADESH	321	100	1.8	26.4	3	.9
NEPAL	33	30	1.2	5.0	2	1.7
PAKISTAN	2226	573	6.5	25.4	2	5.5
SRI LANKA	204	30	3.1	9.4	12	1.8
SAARC AVE. WITHOUT INDIA	696	183	3.2	16.7	5	2.5
AVERAGE OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	173	18220	5.1	19.2	44	4.7
INDIA	9632	1502	3.9	16.9	12	1.9

\* Data not available for Bhutan and the Maldives.  
Source: World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1988, US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1989.

## Military Installations



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